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The Editors
OPENING THE
GOLDEN DOOR

ONE DOLLAR
FEBRUARY 13, 1981

The church & Mr. Reagan's world
J. Bryan Hehir *Abigail McCarthy*

Silent treatment for socialists
George E. Lichtblau

Susan Sontag: an interview
Roger Copeland

The 'counterforce problem'
Carnegie Panel on Security & Arms Control

Dead center Democrats
Samuel Hux

Hope, the missing virtue
E. J. Dionne, Jr.

Alan Paton's utopias
Edward Callan

Reviews: *Gerald Weales, Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr. Anne Fremantle, Robert A. Ludwig, Richard L. Schoenwald, Thomas F. Staley*

A last lament for James Earl Carter

J. Patrick Dobel

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Correspondence

Veterans of the fifties

Santa Barbara, Calif.

To the Editors: Like Michael Harrington [review of *Naming Names*, Dec. 19], I collaborated heavily in the getting up of the facts for, and in the writing of, the Fund for the Republic's report on blacklisting. I agree that Victor Navasky "has all the main facts right" as I know them and that, indeed, his "moral and political analysis is quite compelling." However, in the rush for medals and the chance to swap tales with the Veterans of Moral Anguish of the 1950s, one ought to pause to give thought to others who wrestled with their consciences, often with a good deal more at stake than we diarists and scriveners working under the well-endowed auspices of a safely establishment foundation.

I think, for instance, of Arnold Forster of the Anti-Defamation League. Navasky describes with care and sympathy the ADL's and Forster's response to the agony-inducing choice conjured into being by McCarthyism and the moral failure of political and business "leadership." He does not recount, because he had no occasion to discover, that Forster was also the study's deep throat, so to speak. Without his help, I don't know that we should ever have been able to break out in the detail we did the hidden, jerry-built system that had been devised for the purgation and "clearance" of blacklisting's victims.

I was pointed to Forster by Philip M. Klutznick, then a Chicago-area real estate developer of generous and liberal vision, a force in Cook County politics and most recently commerce secretary in the Carter administration—a man, in short, who had little to gain except in the long run, and then not to himself, by giving me his cooperation. Forster, in turn, told me in detail how the clearance system worked, who the players were, how they worked, and why, in his shrewd judgment, they did what they did. It cost him an appearance before HUAC in which, under the circumstances, he committed himself quite honorably.

I think also of "the other McCarthy." On the night before John Cogley's appearance at the HUAC tribunal, the principal staff members met in a Washington hotel room to rehearse as best we could the questions that would likely be asked about the study. By the time I drove Cogley over to the Hill, my own nerves were edgy simply for lack of sleep. I could only surmise how Cogley felt as he was about to go on public trial for a work of expository journalism—for that is, at bottom, what the report on blacklisting was. There to greet him and to escort him into the hearing room was the then-Congressman Eugene McCarthy.

It was, again under those circumstances, a gutsy performance, and one Cogley long and warmly remembered. So, to be sure, was Cogley's. He was, as Harrington says, magnificent; so much so that an attempt to recall him before the committee for a second shot was "postponed indefinitely" under the withering heat of outrage from a number among our then most influential citizens.

I wish I could agree with Harrington that the report on blacklisting made "a major contribution to the beginning of the end of the list," but the media response to the report, of which I did a subsequent report for the Fund, suggested that more compelling forces were at work. For one thing, the political profit to be gained from HUAC-type inquisitions was petering out. For another the media, especially television, were coming to feel the kind of power—together with a sense of the commodity value of protest—that came to be so marvelously portrayed in the movie *Network*. If there was any sense of embarrassment, it was less at wrongs done than at having been jerked around by a Syracuse grocer and a band of list-keepers. Clifton Fadiman has remarked that he never knew a network executive ever to have been genuinely affected by an idea, except as to its marketability.

Paul Jacobs went on from the blacklist study to do good work, Michael Harrington to give force to his extraordinary—as John Cogley deemed it—compassion. Apart from the theological debates which seem to occupy the Old Left nearly as much as they do the New Right, we owe them a great deal—not the least for keeping alive a vision of that which we might become. This is only to add a bow, too, to the Arnold Forsters and Phil Klutznicks and Eugene McCarthys of the bedeviled fifties. And yet, look where we are.

EDWARD ENGBERG

Those were the days

Poway, Cal.

To the Editors: I really enjoyed Maura Boland's "Rediscovering Sigrid Undset" [Nov. 7]. How thoroughly she captured the essence of a great literary figure.

It took me back to some heady days in college, St. Bernard's in Rochester, N.Y., where I was exposed to some exhilarating English professors. One taught a course titled The Catholic Literary Renaissance and we were introduced to a variety of writers from the liturgical poets to Undset. There was even a semester on Dante!

We were also encouraged to read *Commonweal* . . .

(REV.) CHARLES DOLLEN

A narrow view

Honolulu, Hawaii

To the Editors: I applaud the compassionate tone that permeates Bernard Cooke's article "Contraception and the Synod" [Nov. 21]. It would seem to me that in the church's effort to teach morality, it places far too much stress on the

(Continued on page 93)

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Index of American Periodical Verse, Book Review Digest and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mi. 48106. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. Copyright © 1981 Commonweal Publishing Co.

Illustrations: Cover, pp. 75 and 79, Bas., *Tachydromos*, Greece; p. 68, Mitro, *Ta Nea*, Greece; p. 69 Konopacki, *Waukesha Freeman*; p. 70, Vadillo, *El Sol de Mexico*; p. 83, Carlos Freire.

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Contents

Volume CVIII, Number 3

Correspondence 66

Editorials 67

Hope & fantasy: *E. J. Dionne, Jr.* 68

The silent treatment: *George E. Lichtblau* 70

Church & world—again: *Abigail McCarthy* 72

Mr. Reagan & Catholic apprehensions: *J. Bryan Hehir* 74

A last lament for James Earl Carter: *J. Patrick Dobel* 75

Dead center Dems: *Samuel Hux* 76

What is the 'counterforce problem'? 79

Stage: *Gerald Weales* 81

Screen: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.* 82

The habits of consciousness: *Roger Copeland* 83

Books

Towards the Mountain: *Edward Callan* 87

Stories of Faith: *Robert A. Ludwig* 88

Masterpieces/A Fable of Modern Art: *Richard L. Schoenwald* 90

The Middle Ground: *Thomas F. Staley* 91

Death and Existence: *Anne Fremantle* 92

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Commonweal, A Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts, is published biweekly, except monthly Christmas-New Year's and July and August, by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. Telephone: (212) MU 3-2042. Yearly subscriptions, U.S. and Canada, $22; foreign, $24. Special two-year rate: $39; foreign, $43. Single copy, $1.

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OPENING THE GOLDEN DOOR

CONCERN OVER the number of illegal aliens in this country is growing, and unless economic development can be achieved in Mexico and throughout Latin America, the problem will not go away. Two years ago Congress and the president created an executive-legislative-public commission to study immigration policy, called the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy and chaired by Father Theodore Hesburgh of Notre Dame. In a move certain to arouse heated controversy, the commission recently voted 16-0 to recommend that the status of illegal aliens already in the United States be legalized and that stiff penalties be levied against employers who hire illegal aliens in the future, especially for those who demonstrate a "pattern or practice" of such hiring. At the same time the majority of the commission called for use by prospective employees of existing forms of identification such as birth certificates and high school diplomas, in which there is reported to be a brisk trade in counterfeiting; voted down was a staff proposal for issuing mandatory counterfeit-resistant work permits for all Americans, a move that the staff argued would virtually eliminate illegal immigration over a ten-year period.

As far as amnesty for the illegal aliens already here is concerned, the commission proposal is not as radical as it might first appear; there are so many of them and the legal complications are so extensive that it would be well nigh impossible to round them up and deport them anyway. Nonetheless, public and congressional reaction is likely to be unfavorable unless there is some assurance that the future flow of illegal aliens will be drastically curtailed. For Father Hesburgh and the staff of the commission this fact signaled the necessity for the nationwide, counterfeit-resistant work permits which in turn would make feasible severe penalties for cheating employers. On this point the majority of the commission remained unpersuaded; they would not buy the idea of a mandatory work permit for every working American, citing civil liberty concerns, despite the precedent of social security cards and numbers. For his part Father Hesburgh argued the need for strict penalties for offending employers and noted, "Employer sanctions don't work very well without identification." The matter cannot be considered settled; the commission's full-length final report, due March 1st, will be the most thorough and authoritative government report on the topic ever issued, but Congress is likely to be as divided on the issues as the members of the commission proved to be.

Aside from the crucial issue of illegal aliens, the commission voted in favor of an increase in the basic number of immigrants from 270,000 to 450,000. Neither number includes refugees, who are subject to separate limits, nor immediate relatives of American citizens, who are exempt from numerical limits. Furthermore, the commission recommended admission of 100,000 immigrants a year for five years to accommodate relatives of newly legalized aliens and those who have been waiting

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abroad for years under the current system. Such recommendations for an increase in the number of immigrants to be admitted to this country will undoubtedly provoke heated debate. It is a truism to say that this country was built on immigration, but this fact has not prevented extreme efforts to drastically reduce or prevent the flow of such immigrants. The delivery of the commission's report in March will almost certainly produce similar reactions. Given this fact, it would be useful for President Reagan and the Congress to take into account two recent items in the news.

The first item was based on findings of a study on immigrant families done for the Hesburgh commission by Prof. T. Paul Schultz of Yale and by Prof. Julian L. Simon of the University of Illinois. According to their research, immigrant families start earning more than native-born American families, on the average, within ten years after arriving in the United States. Furthermore, contrary to a widespread belief, they contribute more in taxes than they take in public services. The study also indicates that the children of immigrants, after an initial disadvantage, tend to overtake the children of native-born families in academic performance, as measured by years of schooling and percentage of children completing college—both factors that are good indicators of future economic achievement.

The Schultz-Simon immigration study did not distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants, but its directors said that other studies had shown that there was generally not much difference in the economic progress of legal and illegal immigrants from the same country.

Perhaps this study will only spur increased debate between those who see immigrants as a potential gain for the nation and those who fear they will take scarce jobs and add to the welfare rolls in this country. There is, however, no doubt as to which side of the argument the study's directors are on. Said Professor Simon: "The average immigrant is a remarkably good investment for taxpayers," and he noted that immigrants were "not heavily on welfare or unemployment compensation rolls, as the popular wisdom has it. After about two to six years," he said, "immigrant families come to pay as much in taxes as native families, and after that they pay substantially more." And Professor Schultz said, "We tend to attribute more problems to immigrant groups than is warranted from what we have seen in their rapid upward mobility in our society."

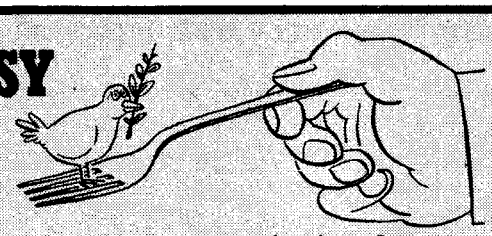
All of this makes useful background material to help in evaluating another item in the news. In a recent report on the subject, the United States Commission on Civil Rights says that immigration laws, as written by Congress and enforced by the Justice Department, are riddled with discrimination that deprives many aliens of their constitutional rights. "The current practices and procedures for the enforcement of that statute result in the denial of rights to American citizens and to documented and undocumented aliens," said the report. The commission, an independent bipartisan body, said that raids conducted by federal agents in pursuit of illegal aliens resulted in unconstitutional searches and seizures; that in attempting to enforce the immigration laws, some local police departments violated the constitutional rights of American citizens and permanent resident aliens; that aliens in deportation hearings receive less due process protection than defendants in criminal proceedings.

The widespread practice of such abuses and public indiffer-

HOPE & FANTASY

THE MISSING VIRTUE

E. J. DIONNE, JR.



YOUR TOWN may not be like New York City, but it's undoubtedly influenced by what goes on here. Of late, I've taken to noticing how much everyone in New York—including me—is given to using the word "fantasy." We "fantasize" about new jobs and promotions and vacations and books we will write and, of course, about sex. Having a lively "fantasy life" is supposed to be a good thing.

What's interesting about the triumph of the word fantasy is the word that fantasy has defeated. One has a fantasy; one no longer has hope.

What's the difference? My Merriam-Webster dictionary tells me that fantasy is "imagination, fancy" or "a product of the imagination: illusion." Hope, it says, is "trust, reliance"; it is a "desire accompanied by expectation of fulfillment" or "one that gives promise for the future.

So you might say that the victory of fantasy over hope is the sign of the chastened age we live in. Where once we expected our desires to be fulfilled, we're now left with passing thoughts that are merely "illusions." Maybe it's a sign of the "malaise" President Carter talked about last year. Once we had Humphrey Bogart. Now we have Woody Allen.

There's another special quality about hope, which is that it carries with it the possibility, at least, of transcendence. To have hope is to have something to rely on. Hope stems from a promise or a resolve. Fantasy is merely a notion that something might be nice or fun or beautiful. But there's nothing very concrete there.

The flight from hope to fantasy is one of the things involved in what Philip Rieff described as *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*. "Religious man was born to be saved," he wrote, "psychological man was born to be pleased. The difference was established long ago when 'I believe,' the

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ence to them derive in large measure from the kinds of misconceptions that the Schultz-Simon study on immigrant economic mobility is designed to eliminate, and we hope it is well publicized. It is past time for the American people to realize that the oft-referred to "tired, poor and huddled masses yearning to breathe free" do very well for themselves — and for the nation — if they are given half a chance. That is what the recommendations of the Hesburgh commission would do.

TERRORISM & RIGHTS

"International terrorism will take the place of human rights in our concern because it is the ultimate of abuse of human rights." This statement by Secretary of State Haig followed comments, at his first press conference, about Soviet and Cuban actions in Latin America and Africa. A lot hangs on the antecedent of "it." Is the secretary saying that terrorism plain and simple is the ultimate abuse of human rights? Or is he narrowing his view, as the context suggests, to *international* terrorism, i.e., what Moscow promotes? The secretary's further explanation was hardly a model of lucidity: "It's been my view human rights is an essential and fundamental aspect of American foreign policy and domestic policy. And as such when you move it from the mainstream of fundamental policy-making and give it an extraordinary role in organizational terms, you frequently result in distortions that probably put in jeopardy the well-meaning objective you seek to achieve. So I would like to see some organizational change in the period ahead — no deemphasis; a change in priorities."

Translated into English, this means something like:

"American power serves human rights — more or less by definition. Therefore there is no need to insure a systematic attention to human rights by establishing a high-level post for human rights in the state department, by issuing regular reports on human-rights violations in nations receiving U.S. aid, and so on. Indeed, such efforts constrain use of American power. We won't stop talking about human rights altogether. We will stop allowing it to interfere with the overriding task of opposing the Soviet Union and its allies."

Does the secretary's answer suggest a double standard for terrorism? International terrorism (Soviet, Libyan, or Palestinian) is evil, but domestic terrorism (Argentinian, Salvadoran, South African, Guatemalan) is, well, ugly but nonetheless tolerable? Does his answer suggest that the key to our opposition to terrorism will not be the outrage it does to life, dignity, and freedom, but the fact that this or that source of arms or guerrilla training can be detected?

One reason for not being reassured is Secretary Haig's swift dismissal of Robert E. White as ambassador to El Salvador. Mr. White has stood by America's policy of backing the

cry of the ascetic, lost precedence to 'one feels,' the caveat of the therapeutic."

Belief, of course, implies commitment. Merely to "feel" something is to free oneself of any obligation to act; feelings come and go. Beliefs, however, become embedded in your life, so that even when you don't act upon them, your beliefs at least force you to face a contradiction. And sometimes, you even act on your beliefs.

I bring all this up because I've thought for a while that one of the most hopeful theological movements around is (appropriately enough) the theology of hope. Hope, it seemed to me, always got shortchanged in the great trinity of Christian virtues, even though it is central to the orientation a Christian brings to every action in his or her life.

And hope has an additional importance for the Christian confronting both secularized utopian visions and the cheap grace proffered by religious charlatans: It requires, in fact demands, that the Christian remain critical. Jürgen Moltmann, in some ways the father of the theology of hope, captured this well: "Hope's statements of promise . . . must stand in contradiction to the reality which can at present be experienced. They do not result from experiences, but are the condition for the possibility of new experiences. . . . They do not seek to illuminate the reality which exists, but the reality which is coming."

Later in his *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann remarks: "Realism, still less cynicism, was never a good ally of Christian faith. But if the Christian hope destroys the presumption in futuristic movements, then it does so not for its own sake, but in order to destroy in these hopes the *seeds of resignation*, which emerge at the latest with the ideological reign of terror in the utopias in which the hoped-for reconciliation with existence becomes an enforced reconciliation."

Christian hope, in short, both permits action and tests it. It allows neither quiescence nor triumphalist violence. All those who have it are subject to its disciplines. Reigns of terror are built on fantasies.

Fantasy, of course, has a rich tradition and many uses—not the least of which being that fantasies sometimes turn into hopes. But fantasy is no substitute for hope, either linguistically or philosophically. Neither are "feelings" substitutes for belief.

At the entrance to Dante's hell are the words, "Abandon hope all ye who enter here." The inhabitants of Dante's hell can fantasize all they want.

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Extra copies are available of the January 30 "Contemporary Theology Issue" of *Commonweal* (10-25 copies, 60¢ each; over 25 copies, 50¢ each).

Salvadoran junta as a "middle road" between extreme right and armed left, a policy that this journal has increasingly questioned. At the same time, Ambassador White has been an outspoken advocate of the Carter administration's human rights emphasis. In the midst of what, after all, is not a simple situation — neither the politics nor the popular support of the Salvadoran guerrillas being as broad, for example, as those of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua — Ambassador White refused to whitewash the junta's failings or blind himself to the underlying struggle for economic and political justice that is rocking all of Central America. His removal does not augur well for Alexander Haig's crusade against terrorism.

Eurosocialism in Washington

THE SILENT TREATMENT

CAN AN ALTERNATIVE GET A HEARING?

LAST DECEMBER, only one month after the election of Ronald Reagan, a conference on "Eurosocialism and America" brought some two thousand participants together in Washington—hundreds were turned away and many had to stand during the opening ceremony. "Of all the problems to have in a United States which just elected Ronald Reagan—" joked conference chairman Michael Harrington, "too many people at a socialist meeting!"

The turnout, however, was understandable, given the unprecedented panoply of stars from the Socialist International and the principal European social democratic and labor parties. Among the personalities assembled for the occasion were Willy Brandt, chairman of the Socialist International; former Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme; former Dutch Prime Minister Joop den Uyl; Tony Benn, contender for the leadership of the British Labor party; François Mitterrand, candidate for the French presidency together with Michel Rocard, his rival for the leadership of the French Socialist party; Felipe Gonzalez, head of the Spanish Socialist party plus a number of other less prominent representatives of European socialist and trade union movements.

On the American side, besides Harrington the participants included Ronald V. Dellums, Democratic representative from California and member of the Black Congressional Caucus, who claims to be the only socialist in Congress; William Winpisinger of the International Association of Machinists (IAM); Irving Bluestone and various other representatives of the United Auto Workers; and Gloria Steinem, editor of *MS Magazine*.

This star-studded cast and an overflow crowd of participants from the academic community, civil rights groups, the women's movement, consumer and environmental activists, and the world of veteran labor and socialist militants should have assured, by themselves, considerable attention from the media, political commentators, and liberal strategists. But there was a further reason why "Eurosocialism and America" was an apt theme. Ever since the election there had been much opining that liberal ideas were threadbare, either in their actual workability or their political allure. At the same time neither the press nor the public appeared to have a confidence, extending much beyond good will, in the still nebulous Reagan approach to the economy. The "Eurosocialism and America" conference, according to its organizers, the Institute for Democratic Socialism, an educational foundation close to Harrington's Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee was meant to inject into the "conventional wisdom" of American politics the ideas of European socialist leaders who knew from experience that national economies could be more productive and equitable than the U.S.'s without being based on the "trickle-down" business-oriented policies that have come to dominate Washington. On their side, the European leaders hoped to address the economic problems facing all advanced industrial nations, problems they feared were being exacerbated by the conservative trend represented by Margaret Thatcher and now Reagan. "Milton Friedman . . . is your worst export," jabbed the former Dutch prime minister Joop den Uyl. "If you don't contain him, we will have to impose import restrictions." But leaders like Olof Palme were also interested in a bit of preemptive diplomacy; they warned the Reagan team of their bitter disapproval of U.S. intervention in El Salvador and advised against the abandonment of North-South concerns for East-West conflict.

In view of all this—big names, timely topics, capacity crowds—it is worth asking why the conference, at least for those not actually present, so largely turned into a "non-event" whose aims and accomplishments remained ill-understood or totally ignored. Only Willy Brandt received national TV attention, and the *Washington Post* and *Star* provided minimal backpage coverage. Such articles as did appear, as a result of press conferences at the Carlton Hilton and the National Press Club, dealt mostly with general foreign policy issues and European-American differences over detente, Iran, Afghanistan, etc., rather than with the conference or the current and future role of democratic socialism. (This emphasis may have reflected a difference in priorities between

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the European guests and conference's sponsors.) The *New York Times* did not carry a word about the meeting, an odd kind of silent treatment considering the number of prominent European personalities involved. The *Times* later admitted to a journalistic failure; but some of the conference organizers persisted in suspecting they were up against a politically motivated editorial decision. The contrast between European press and TV coverage and the lack of a corresponding American media presence was quite striking, but subsequent European press reports also indicated a notable lack of focus and interest.

PERHAPS EVEN MORE disturbing for the conference sponsors—and significant for limiting the meeting's impact—was the fact that the mainstream of the American labor movement had kept a deliberate and studied aloofness from this event. AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland declined an invitation to participate as did a number of other prominent labor leaders and Democratic party personalities. Senator Edward Kennedy, for instance, had been willing to be listed as "invited" on the conference program but in the end limited his role to meeting privately with some of the foreign guests.

The cold-shouldering of the Eurosocialist meeting by the AFL-CIO stemmed largely from the historical split of the American socialist movement following the death of Norman Thomas over such issues as Vietnam, the Cold War, and U.S. foreign policy as well as rival ties with the Socialist International of Harrington's group and the Social Democrats-USA. Ever since this break the Social Democrats have maintained close cooperative ties with the AFL-CIO, whereas Harrington's group assumed positions on a number of international and domestic issues more closely in tune with those of the European socialists but in conflict with policies propounded by the late George Meany and largely continued by his successor Lane Kirkland. The principal ties of Harrington's Democratic Socialists with the American labor movement are thus the UAW, the Machinists, the State, County and Municipal Workers (AFSCME) and a few other national and local labor groups inside and outside the AFL-CIO, which are generally identified with the "left". Thus "the word" got around from AFL-CIO headquarters to avoid any appearance of endorsing the conference and its objectives.

The AFL-CIO position had also been conveyed to a number of fraternal labor organizations abroad, most importantly the predominantly socialist German Trade Union Federation (DGB), which abstained from participation despite the fact that the German Marshall Fund was supporting the event. European unionists would like to see the AFL-CIO return to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)—talks are currently underway—and did not want to antagonize the Kirkland leadership. An added provocation in the eyes of the AFL-CIO was the fact that the organizers had included among the invitees a three-member delegation of the Communist-dominated Italian CGIL headed by its Secretary for International Affairs Giacinto Miltello. As this fact became known, U.S. labor participation became further reduced and in the end was largely limited to the IAM, several representatives from AFSCME, the Bricklayers, the Graphic Arts International Union, and the UAW. Brian Turner, Economic Policy Director of the Industrial Union Department (IUD) of the AFL-CIO, also participated in one workshop on "Democratizing Capital Formation," an issue of considerable current interest to nearly all industrial unions.

On the European side trade union attendance was conspicuously weighted with labor leaders identified as proponents of the political and ideological line of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), an offspring of the ICFTU which had made itself independent from that body over questions of membership restrictions and East-West union contacts. The ETUC now includes among its ranks not only socialist movements, but also the Italian Communist CGIL and a number of Christian unions. Its members meet freely with trade union groups of the Soviet bloc and their internationals, and the ETUC generally identifies with detente and non-alignment vis-à-vis the "superpowers," themes viewed by the AFL-CIO as essentially anti-American and compromising the concept of free trade unionism. Sentiments of concern along the ETUC lines found expression in arguments raised at some of the workshops that the new administration may renew the practice of exploiting AFL-CIO international activities and its regional institutes for "intelligence" and other *realpolitik* objectives. Among the more prominent foreign trade union participants identified with the ETUC line were Pierre Hureau of the French Confederation of Democratic Trade Unions (CFDT), a body that has evolved out of the post-war Catholic labor movement; Rudolf Meidner of the Swedish Labor Organization; Clive Jenkins of the British Trades Union Congress (BTUC); Dan Gallin, Secretary General of the International Union of Foodworkers (IUF), which has a number of American affiliates; Ilkka Erich of the Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions, and the three CGIL members.

One of the main themes of the conference—and of the high-level closed meeting of economic experts, unionists, and political figures that preceded it—was the central role of trade unions in revitalizing democratic socialism and in bringing about a new democratic economic order. This emphasis along with many of the social and economic themes of the conference undoubtedly had a potentially broader appeal for important segments of the AFL-CIO, especially following the Reagan victory; but the likelihood of infusing the mainstream American labor movement with such ideas was sharply limited by the persistent divisions within American and European unionism and the differences over international affairs expressed at the conference.

Following a sobering but eloquent address by Brandt on his "Program for Survival" in a world of limited resources, the largely youthful participants streamed from the closing session elated. They should also have realized how many practical obstacles impede the conference themes from receiving a wider hearing.

GEORGE E. LICHTBLAU

(George E. Lichtblau is a former labor attaché who has served in Africa, the Far East, and the Middle East, and has written and lectured on international labor affairs.)

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Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

CHURCH & WORLD—AGAIN

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN & CONCRETE SOLUTIONS

THE USES of ritual are never more clear than at the end of an administration in Washington. The city has what might be called a ceremonial heart. There are laudatory editorials and parties to honor the outgoing as well as the incoming. It was at such a party honoring now ex-Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie that a bishop approached him and said, "I want you to know, Mr. Secretary, that we were very pleased that you were the first Catholic secretary of state." The secretary was genuinely surprised as were the people standing by. Amazingly enough, it had gone unremarked, even by the office-holder himself, that the United States had formally entrusted its foreign policy to a Catholic for the first time—twenty years after the election of our first and only Catholic president. Or that it was about to do so for the second time with the appointment of Alexander Haig.

We have almost forgotten that only twenty-five years ago the election of Catholics to the United States Senate was opposed by commentators, some of them serious political scientists, on the grounds that the Senate had more to do with foreign affairs—that its powers "to advise and consent" were often crucial in such matters. The House—well, yes, it could not be helped—but the Senate, never! We like to think that all that is behind us because of the election of 1960. There is even a sense that it is not particularly good taste to refer to it. Or to recall that part of the price for that election was Kennedy's questioning by the Houston Ministers' Conference and the unequivocal statement he made there—"I do not accept the right of any ecclesiastical official to tell me what to do in the sphere of my public responsibility as an elected official."

Little more than twenty years ago D.W. Brogan could still write in trying to explain America to Europeans and to Americans themselves: "But it is unfortunate that the American Catholics are, by their training, so ready to suspect the worst of their neighbors and that their neighbors suspect the worst of them . . . It is especially a strain in the field of foreign policy." And he could go so far as to say that it was fortunate that the post-World War II retreat to the "old isolationism, the old village intolerance" was led by an Irish-American Catholic. "A 'dry,' evangelical McCarthy would have had more effect and have lasted longer. But the rural masses that feared and hated everything foreign ranked the pope high among the dangerous foreign elements." But the pope has now been in the White House, you say, invited by an evangelical president. And in the years since then there have been slots for Catholics in the cabinet—better slots than the once token Postmaster-

CABBAGES & KINGS

INVASION OF THE PLANT PEOPLE

CAROL LEVINE

THREE cloned mice. See how they replicate. The news that scientists have finally produced mammals that are genetically identical to their progenitors came, appropriately enough, from the University of Geneva in Switzerland, the birthplace of Victor Frankenstein's monster. But while philosophers have not yet begun to construct a serious comparative analysis of the important question of whether Peter Boyle is the quintessential movie monster or just another song-and-dance man, we must now face, with ever increasing urgency, an even more vexing ethical problem: is cloning good or evil or merely repetitious?

On one view, little good can come of it. One mouse looks very much like the others anyway. Given the state of the world, what kinds of people are likely to be cloned? Rock stars, gossip columnists, and television evangelists. On the other hand, clones could pick up pizza on the way home, talk to answering machines, and prepare income tax returns. On balance clones may be more of a benefit than a risk; but before we can say this with assurance, one especially troubling dilemma will have to be resolved: who will stand in line and buy the tickets and who will park the car?

If the ethical issues surrounding cloning have yet to be resolved, those raised by the possibility of still another, even more startling technological advance have yet to be raised. Professor Edward Cocking, a distinguished botanist at the University of Nottingham in England, has been developing techniques of plant cell fusion to produce hardier petunias. Recently he and his colleagues managed to fuse some plant cells with some animal cells. According to Bernard Dixon in *The Sciences*, the *National Enquirer* was the first publication to alert the public to the potential in this scientific breakthrough — the creation of "plant people." Experts interviewed by the *Enquirer* (a sociologist, an anthropologist, and a science fiction writer) envision giant oak trees that spend two hundred to three hundred years contemplating the universe, trees that produce diesel fuel

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Generalship like Justice, Labor, and HEW—even if not until now the office of secretary of state. Why make a point of it?

The point is that it is important what teaching strategy is adopted by the church in the years ahead. The well-being of many—even their lives—can be at stake. Only a few days ago Archbishop Hickey of the Washington archdiocese felt it necessary to defend the right of the church to speak on public affairs. But it is often not the right which is in question but the manner of its exercise. John F. Kennedy in his statement to the Houston ministers was, John Cogley tells us in his book, *Catholic America*, making "a kind of declaration of lay independence." "But Kennedy was not denying his church or its authority to define the moral law; he was, rather, insisting on the layman's responsibility to make political decisions on the basis of his own conscientious judgments." Most Catholic office-holders today, consciously or unconsciously, hold this autonomy as their right. What is more, in doing so they seem to be in conformity with Vatican II's statement that secular duties and activities belong properly to laymen, and that laymen should know that it is "generally [by] the function of their well-formed Christian conscience" that right is done. "Let the layman not imagine that his pastors are always such experts, that to every problem which arises . . . they can give him a concrete solution, or even that such is their mission. Rather, enlightened by Christian wisdom . . . let the layman take on his own distinctive role" (*Constitution on the Church and the Modern World*).

In these last twenty years Catholic office-holders and Catholic citizens have grown more certain in insisting on their right to formulate the concrete solutions. "As citizens they must cooperate with other citizens, using *their own particular skills* and *acting on their own responsibility*" (*Decree on the Laity*, italics mine). It is worth noting that those first most insistent on rejecting concrete solutions to social problems as advanced by churchmen, even in papal encyclicals, were the conservatives who today back Haig. William Buckley evoked such a storm by his reservations about *Mater et Magistra*—summed up in the flippancy, "Mater, si; Magistra, no"—that Garry Wills, then still a conservative, wrote *Politics and Catholic Freedom* in his defense, seeking to establish a theological ground for such dissent.

How best can the church exercise her prophetic role? "There is something to be said for a church in which authority does not come from the grass roots; grass roots are sometimes poisoned," wrote Brogan in 1956 apropos of the American bishops' then strengthening stand against racism. And Buckley concedes that there are times in history when the church must command opposition to an overriding evil and he cites Hitler and Nazism as an example. But authority must find its channels.

Today, at long last, the church espouses with a clear voice the cause of the poor and the oppressed, and the question of human rights would seem as compelling as the problems of racism and Nazism. Mindful of the independence of the Catholic citizen, mindful of the past (perhaps still lingering) distrust of the church in the arena of foreign policy, should the church not seek concrete solutions for complicated problems with the help of those whose responsibility those problems are or have been?

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

(supposedly discovered recently in Brazil) that can also be trained as gas station attendants, cacti that can guard military installations and shoot deadly seeds at intruders. (Historians of this whole pheomenon should not overlook the seminal contributions of the Jolly Green Giant and the Fruit of the Loom bunch.)

But the *Enquirer* did not interview ethicists, who would surely have raised the relevant ethical questions. Are these plant people moral agents? Do they have rights? Will they hang out in green bars? Will they be given equal access to the health care system, even if it means that Blue Cross will now have to cover tree surgery? Who will rake the leaves?

To these general questions must be added species-specific ones. Will the venerable philosopher oaks belong to the analytic school or will they be pluralists? Will they publish their own journals printed on paper they themselves contribute? Will their c.v.'s be too thick to staple? Will they remove their branches in the movies? And if they refuse, will it be justified to yell "Fire!" in a crowded theater? As thorny as these questions are, they pale beside the overriding one: will the philosopher oaks get tenure?

Plant people along the lines of the diesel tree-gas-station attendants are less threatening to contemplate, at least at first. What a beguiling prospect! A maple tree that can make pancakes to go along with the syrup, or a grapevine that can recommend a good inexpensive Chardonnay to go with the sole. Dogwoods and pussy willows might have no instrumental value but still make charming pets.

The danger of course is that we will begin to treat these plant people as means rather than as ends. And when their lives are ending, will we treat them with dignity? Some diehards will undoubtedly keep watering them long after there is no hope of their returning to a conscious, sapient state.

But what if we are not the decision-makers? They may try to take over and make pets or producers out of us. Led by a headstrong cabbage, advised by philosopher oaks, fueled by diesel trees, and defended by soldier cacti, they could probably win an electoral majority, if not the popular vote. And if the cabbage has monarchical tendencies, there goes our way of life.

After careful reflection, we may well decide that the most prudent course is to send in the clones but to nip the plant people in the bud.

CAROL LEVINE

(Carol Levine is the editor of the Hastings Center Report.)

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Mr. Reagan & Catholic apprehensions

J. Bryan Hehir

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH in a multiplicity of places is touched by the consequences of American foreign policy. The awareness of this fact is sharpened for church leaders by the advent of a new administration in Washington, intent on redirecting the course of the United States in the world.

From Seoul to San Salvador, from Poland to Pretoria and from São Paulo to Salisbury, the Catholic church, often through its bishops, has been a voice and a force influencing war and peace, human rights and human needs in a world scarred by injustice and oppression.

The issues differ in each country and the style of Catholic engagement varies significantly. One constant in the religious and political equation, however, is that all of these nations are strongly affected by the prevailing posture and policies of the United States. For that reason the transition from the Carter to the Reagan policy is being watched quietly but very closely.

The lines of President Reagan's foreign policy will take some months to surface. At present we have indications of what the policy may be, but not clear examples. Every foreign policy, however, is a mix of ideas, personalities, and organizational patterns.

Richard Neustadt's dictum, "Where you sit determines where you stand," has focused scholarly attention on the organizational patterns of policymaking and the personalities in them. From Neustadt's study, *Presidential Power*, through Graham Allison's research on the Cuban missile crisis, *The Essence of Decision*, to a spate of books and articles in the 1970s, the bureaucratic dimensions of policy have been examined in detail. The salience of this analysis has been illustrated by the continuing competition, in both Democratic and Republican administrations, between the national security adviser and the secretary of state.

In the campaign President Reagan committed himself to a cabinet-style of governance, and specifically to a strong secretary of state who would be the determining voice in foreign affairs. The president's cabinet choices point toward fulfillment of that commitment. The key selection has been Alexander Haig as secretary of state. Whatever one might think of the substance of Mr. Haig's views, it is clear from his confirmation hearing that he holds them in a manner unfettered by doubt or question. In contrast to this strong center in the secretary's post, there is a veritable vacuum concerning foreign policy in the other key cabinet positions. Nothing in Caspar W. Weinberger's past, including his confirmation hearings, provides evidence of substantive views on defense policy. At treasury, Mr. Reagan cerntainly has wide-ranging experience in international finance, but few known views on international economic policy. Richard Allen, the National Security Adviser, repeatedly affirms his agreement with the president's position that the National Security Council should not in symbol or substance rival the State Department in the policy process.

On the bureaucratic field of policymaking Mr. Haig is the player to watch; but policy is essentially about ideas. Mr. Haig does not come to office with an extensive publication record of his ideas in the style of Kissinger or Brzezinski, but two themes seem to shape his view of the world. The U.S.-Soviet rivalry is the organizing principle of his perspective, and in this competition, as James Reston has observed, he sees diplomacy in military terms. This focus on the Soviet Union and emphasis on defense spending fits the framework of the Reagan team and the temper of the times.

These two themes are joined in the new administration to a set of other policy ideas: relativizing the human rights component of policy, reducing the significance accorded to North-South issues, returning to a clear division of the globe between those who are "for us" and those who are not, and revivifying the ideological struggle with the Soviets. Secretary Haig has not pronounced himself on all these points, but the new U.N. Ambassador, Dr. Kirkpatrick, has been available for extended commentary on all topics.

The ironic feature of the policy picture is that in spite of an intensification of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry, the precarious choices reside in other areas. While the style and even the substance of superpower policy is open to modification by a new administration, the range of options is narrow. There are some givens in the superpower relationship which any administration must face when it moves from campaigning to governing. These include the universally recognized danger of nuclear war, the strength and determination of one's adversary, and the mutual interest both powers have in the survival of the international system, however much each would like to change its composition.

The superpowers act in a disciplined manner when confronting each other directly. While a miscalculation in this relationship can produce disastrous consequences, the danger of adventurous action is much greater in other areas of policy. As one moves away from the central superpower balance, the willingness to inflate rhetoric, to experiment with policies, and to illustrate how different a new policy team is from its predecessor increases dramatically.

For the Reagan administration the places where Secretary Haig's Soviet-dominated perspective and Ambassador Kirkpatrick's desire to reform the Carter policy coincide is in the El Sal-

(Continued on page 95)

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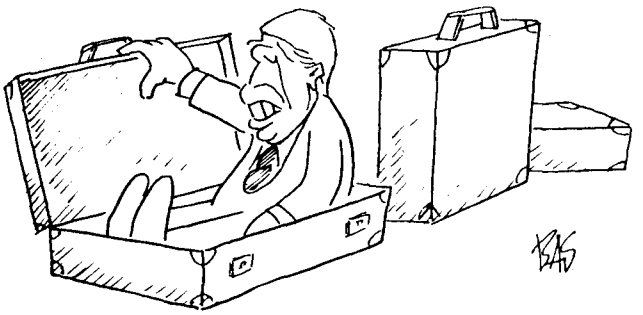
SHOULD OLD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT?



A last lament for James Earl Carter

J. PATRICK DOBEL

JIMMY CARTER wants to go fishing and forget that he was ever president of the United States. His fellow Democrats are ready to hand him his tackle box and push off his row boat. Meanwhile the engines are gunning in the Reagan fleet. But before the wallpaper is changed, statues are torn down and history is rewritten, I propose a quiet lament for the passing of James Earl Carter, warts and all.

This is a lament, not a panegyric; I do not want to ignore the manifest faults of the man as president. A loner, he commanded intense personal loyalty, but he failed to forge lasting political loyalty. He regularly violated the basic rules of politics. He forgot his friends, misjudged his enemies, ignored his allies and seldom cultivated consistent or enduring political support. When he sporadically tried to act politically, friends and allies were often left in the lurch by his mercurial shifts. More often, however, foreign and domestic policy was initiated with a cogenital lack of consultation.

Carter ignored his party and subordinated it to his needs; he presided over its disintegration. As a result when Carter did make hard or courageous decisions, he made them without adequate support or with badly articulated reasons, paving the way for sudden reversals. His presidency remained relatively open and fluid, but he was not above waspish loyalty purges and was correspondingly blind to the faults of his loyal subordinates. His halting cadence chopped speeches into incoherence. As he chewed his best lines, he never communicated a clear vision of politics or persuasively justified his policies. While capable of anger, even meanness, he was unable to convey a passionate commitment to the common good. This lack of passionate vision combined with a picayune approach to problems encouraged open war among his advisers and further intensified his vacillation. A decent man, a tireless campaigner, a better than average administrator, he fumbled as a leader and practical politician.

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An honest and sympathetic account of Carter's leaving requires not just an enumeration of his faults but also an appreciation of the harsh constraints of his political world. As long as legitimate American leaders accept corporate capitalism, colossal problems of social and economic inequity will not be tackled and any leader must bow to the demands of high capital just to keep people employed and provide basic services. To judge Carter as if there were any significantly different or less hamstrung realistic alternatives on the left is an act of bad faith.

Carter confronted an aging, inefficient, and energy-vulnerable economy dominated by transnational conglomerates. Twenty years of bottom-line corporate management had grossly distorted American investment patterns to a preference for short-term gains, easy mergers, and high returns rather than long-term research and modernization. Flabby and inept management in mature sectors such as steel and autos weakened the companies and left them poorly prepared for increased international competition. Neanderthal opposition to ecological controls generated brittle and sometimes excessive counter-regulation; accreted regulation both helped and aggravated the situation.

This ill-prepared economy then had to absorb the successive shock waves of a five-fold increase in oil prices over the last five years as they rippled through the most energy-inefficient economy in the world. Similar raw material increases beyond any United States control accelerated the inflation. Unions amplified the effects as they demanded wage increases to match the inflation. American currency hemorrhaged and hundreds of billions of dollars gushed to the Middle East, further drying up investment potential. Runaway energy catalyzed inflation; compounded by long-term economic weakness and mismanagement and further distorted by some regulation, this made the economy immune to classical Keynesian and Democratic strategies. This was Carter's "inheritance."

The time thus required cohesive and strong action, but Carter also inherited a presidency terribly weakened by the ordeals of Watergate and Vietnam. With his institutional pow-

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ers limited, he presided over a two-party system whose discipline had slipped to an all-time low and a Congress balkanized into committees. The committees were protected by "iron triangles" of bureaucratic and interest-group collusion almost impervious to consistent executive leadership—indeed, no president had effectively led Congress since 1966.

Carter was also bequeathed a chronically understaffed, undertrained "professional" army buffeted by low morale. The expensive and ineffectual non-conscript army was led by an unimaginative and bureaucratized officer corps wedded to vulnerable and expensive technologies and seemingly always preparing to fight the last war. Regardless of whether he pared, improved, or hurt the military, he did not start with much. Red-baiting aside, little could have been done to stop the Soviets from entering Afghanistan or from intimidating their satellites. Marginal Russian calculations might have been affected, but the sea change in Russian intervention capabilities and attitudes occurred before Carter was elected.

In short, Jimmy Carter possessed grave weaknesses, but he faced insurmountable obstacles. Now as the first glimmerings of a Reagan world appear, many of us, petulant liberals included, will miss Carter more than we know. The constraints screamed "retrenchment," but he gamely fought a consistent rear-guard action to preserve and strengthen gains of better years, and in a number of areas he even significantly extended them. We will miss him not only for the things he refused to do, things which Reagan waits anxiously to do, but for what he accomplished.

Foreign policy offers the most immediate reasons to regret Carter's passing. Alexander Haig's plans to purge the State Department of moderate and progressive elements combines nicely with the administration's announced predilection for

DEAD CENTER DEMS

A MAP FOR GOING NOWHERE

SAMUEL HUX

THE POLLS weren't even closed November 4, 1980, before that which passes for wise counsel was being pronounced. The Democratic party must move to the political *center*. I have three questions, which may in fact be one question phrased three different ways: (1) Isn't it a little crowded there already? (2) How do you move to where you already are? (3) Isn't it possible that's one of the factors that cost the Democrats the election?

What is this "center" the Democratic party is being invited to move to on the assumption it's not already there? That is, what is it other than a place where the frightened can run, waving arms for attention and whining "Me too, me too; don't leave me out"?

According to one extending the invitation, Anthony Lewis, it is a rejection of ideological purism and a re-embrace of the genius of American politics, coalition. There are questions begged here in the most beggarly fashion. "Coalition" of course makes sense; although only when, excuse me, it *makes sense*. But ideological purism? *That* has characterized the Democratic party under Carter? or under anyone? The *American* Democratic party? I'm stunned..

William Safire somewhat more precisely defines this new center as a space where the conservatives, old and new, of the Republican party can meet the "new liberals" who are to arise and flourish in the Democratic party. The Democrats' new liberalism will appreciate such issues as a "teen-age wage" and tax incentives which will make private industry rush to take over social programs from the state.

In other words, the "center" is what used to be called "right of center." So the Democratic party is being counseled to move *to* the right *from* the center. And the center is squarely where it's been. If, say, Michael Foot represents the left-wing of European social democracy and Helmut Schmidt represents its center, then the *left-wing* of the institutional Democratic party has represented the far *right-wing* of social democracy; and the majority of the Democratic party has had priorities roughly equivalent to those of the Independents of Giscard d'Estaing in France, the British Liberals, the liberal minority factions of Christian Democracy in Germany and Italy—"roughly," I say, but a little more cautious. Has our Democratic party pushed very seriously, for instance, for the national health insurance which most of those European groups accept, if they did not institute it themselves?

But given our alternatives, I'd be moderately happy—moderately—if the Democratic party, shed of Carter, remained where it was, with a vaguely centrist majority and a minority of right-wing social democrats as a conscience. I am that put off by a move to a "new" center which is just a new conservatism. If the Democrats so move, then we have even less chance than before for a sensible foreign policy balancing national defense and international modesty; a national health program which isn't merely a windfall to physicians and consequently a self-fulfilling prophetic drain on taxation; a welfare program which isn't a punitive degradation of recipients of pittances; a redistribution of income not trivialized by the absurd argument that in-kind transfers are really money (something you can spend at will or invest); an attitude of largesse toward the handicapped which isn't merely tush-tushing over the afflictions of nature; a philosophy of racial justice which is more than a reshuffling of the same

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"moderately repressive regimes." Such regimes, of course, do not disturb the "rhythms" of poverty, exploitation, and helter-skelter urbanization, which subsist at the pleasure of the international economy. The Reagan election has touched off gleeful repression by the right in Latin America and been welcomed by such human rights luminaries as President Marcos of the Philippines.

Such dark auguries of the new order sharply outline Carter's accomplishments. He worked hard to make human rights a central issue in American policy. Of necessity that policy was often inconsistent or only cosmetic, but countless political prisoners benefited and, as the new Latin American violence demonstrates, certain regimes did restrain themselves and initiate changes under American pressure. Human rights rhetoric dominated international forums, seeped into the rhetoric of third world countries, and under United States prodding became a factor in handing out international aid. For the first time in a generation the United States took the aspirations of the majority of people in Latin America and Africa seriously and helped, although tentatively, to midwife the possibility of progressive leftist regimes not beholden to the Soviet Union. America crossed a watershed not only in third world power but also in United States attitudes.

DOMESTIC CONSENSUS and support for entitlement programs and the civil rights initiatives of the past twenty years have shattered. The decline in real income and the attempt to recoup it through tax revolts make calls for social progress even less palatable. Nonetheless, Carter consistently fought to adequately finance and reform entitlement programs. Food stamps were humanely reformed and will probably survive Reagan, thanks to Carter's rescue. The cities actually function

old deck; an economy free of the inflation we're willing to tackle almost any way (unemployment, recession, hard money) except by re-defining what's a "justifiable" profit margin; a government-imposed responsibility on private industry to consider the human ecology and not just profit-maximizing in all it does; what Michael Harrington calls the democratization of the investment function, and a dozen etceteras—you get my thrust.

MAYBE I'M MERELY suggesting that the Democratic party give itself half a chance to stand for something instead of agreeing merely to back up, while uttering a few cosmetic corrections, the Republican party, which sure as hell will stand for something. Maybe I'm only expressing the old radical, progressive, or democratic socialist dream that parties align themselves ideologically, while the popular wisdom has it that that means stagnation. Or maybe there are other considerations.

Consider the election four years from now. This election will take place in a vastly altered political landscape. There seem to be no "solid" regions any more and almost no "solid" ethnic groups either. Perhaps blacks still may be, but would they continue to be if the Democrats made a move which cannot look to them like anything but a desertion?

What has replaced the solid-bloc-which-can-be-counted-on is not caprice, but the continued existence, now more relevant than ever in the absence of the solid regional or ethnic bloc, of what pop wisdom denies: the fact that Americans *do* have the habit, even if the overlapping two-party structure often obscures it, of voting *ideologically*, if they have the opportunity. Correction: voting ideologically, *after a fashion*. That is, they vote on issues, not according to regional or group tradition; and they vote on issues according to what they think is in their own best interest—but often isn't. And it often isn't quite simply because the single-issue temptation persists. For instance, a blue-collar worker (representing, evidently, roughly fifty percent of blue-collar labor) votes a conservative ticket, perhaps because he's offended that the government should pay people "for not working" and that the "bleeding-heart liberals" approve the payment while he works an eight-hour shift and is beholdin' to no man; he's unaware or for now unconcerned that payment *is* in his own best interest since the company he works for may, with no one or no institution being able to stop it, pull up stakes and move elsewhere, waving good-bye to its labor force and leaving it high and dry.

That single-issue temptation persists, is encouraged to persist, so long as single issues are not melded into the interlocking concepts of an ideology, a *coalition of ideas* so to speak. And the facts of life are such that an interlocking of concepts is not going to be recognizable, visible, unless it is associated with a party, and that if parties do not represent coherent ideologies but represent instead the more-or-less same pot-pourri of some o' this and some o' that, an appeal to these and an appeal to them, the single-issue temptation remains and deepens. And as long as the single-issue temptation remains, it's the relatively powerless, those it's not so necessary to appeal to, who remain powerless, their powerlessness deepened. *That* should concern the Democratic party if there's any honor left there.

It's to the advantage of the politically weak that a ticket mean an ideology, for among the interlocking concepts which make an ideology may ride, like a rider to a bill, some notion that enriches the lives of a few while meaning little or nothing to most although not in conflict with the interests of most, so that the most, while they wouldn't be agitated in its favor, would accept it as a part of the package.

The counsel that the Democratic party move to a new center and forego the temptations of ideological politics is at best, I think, craven.

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despite severe depression. Remarkably, violence and despair have been warded off in northern and midwestern cities, thanks to careful and well administered federal aid. A number of cities, rather than being left to die, even struggled successfully to renew themselves with judicious combinations of local initiative and significant federal aid. Education bore the brunt of shock-trooper tax tactics across the country, but Carter increased its share of the budget and gave educators a fighting chance to defend themselves with their own department.

Carter's legacy to women and minorities is even greater. Working on borrowed time, he fully supported affirmative action and placed the government behind the critical precedents of *Bakke* and *Weber*. Under his management the bureaucracies pushed affirmative action as far and as fast as possible in policy and law even as disenchantment mounted. As the Senate begins to "Hatch" at the programs, the laws, personnel, and policy are securely in place . Likewise Carter exerted a consistent effort towards integration. Busing was modified to encourage magnet schools and accommodate integrated neighborhoods and voluntary efforts. Carter vetoed a cowered Congress's attempt to gut busing before any reasonable alternatives were in place. His appointments of women and minorities have created a whole generation of officials whose training and experience will increase their penetration of the nation's elite. As feminists lost momentum, he fought for the extension of the ERA deadline but wisely refused to use the government to blackmail state legislatures. The government vigorously pushed to enforce equal pay provisions.

Although mocked for his expansion of cabinet departments, Carter hands the country a much leaner and more responsive bureaucracy. His milestone civil service reform, gained after a fierce fight, enabled merit to be rewarded and incompetence finally to be penalized. For the first time, the government possesses upper-echelon pools of qualified and mobile managers unencumbered by parochial interests. New whistleblower legislation complemented these reforms and tried to protect public servants who report government malfeasance.

Striving for a more competent and humane bureaucracy, Carter also stole thunder from the right with his careful deregulation of the transportation industry. Efforts to castrate the FTC and other agencies were headed off with decisive action, and still other agencies such as OSHA were saved by timely reforms and sensible administration. The bureaucratic and regulatory apparatus stands leaner, tougher and better prepared to endure the assaults about to be launched upon it.

Carter's finest legacy may be his judicial appointments. The quality, political beliefs, and minority mix of the appointees have helped transform the lower levels of the judiciary, and they will help resist the depredations of the Supreme Court. The Justice Department has been depoliticized and has made extensive headway in attacks on crime, organized and white collar. These gains will be jeopardized as cronyism returns to Justice and the Judiciary Committee prepares new witch hunts against former student radicals while the Teamsters take their rightful place in the Reagan administration.

As the landmark pollution laws come up for renewal against Reagan's genial opposition and drawn knives in the Sena. Carter's environmental accomplishments will become increasingly obvious. Tacking to the requirements of a recession, Carter's administration developed flexible and imaginative enforcement strategies compatible with faster growth. He stood firm on the fifty-five mile speed limit, battled to encourage conservation, and provided firm but limited support for alternative energy sources. Even as westerners demanded their right to plunder federal lands, Carter steadily increased the acres of protected lands, and his obdurate support helped enshrine the capstone Alaska Wilderness Bill. The western water boondoggles were challenged at great political cost. His nuclear compromise, however, satisfied no one. Even as he fought for the primacy of conservation, his attempt to push coal faltered, and no clear intermediate alternatives existed except for limited use of nuclear power.

THE NUCLEAR POWER issue demonstrates that Carter's environmental policy cannot be assessed without looking at energy dilemmas. After three presidents had failed to get a rational energy plan, Carter manhandled a plan through. Deregulation was inevitable and necessary, especially to encourage conservation. At considerable political cost, Carter engineered the emphasis upon conservation and minimized the social costs. The windfall profit tax not only assured the enmity of Reagan's beloved oil companies but ensured that some money would be rationally allocated for long-term energy goals. Carter's new Energy Department became the one consistent advocate for conservation and alternative energy. The department also minimized interest-group pilfering of federal land and disparate energy programs.

These energy battles took place in a surreal atmosphere because many Americans still do not believe in a crisis. Tremendous ideological and special interest opposition was mounted against *any* initiative. Carter's leadership could have been more politically effective and consistent, but he took courageous and hard actions in areas such as oil imports and through sheer doggedness finally got a reasonable and fair plan in place; a plan which is being vindicated by energy conservation figures and the stunning declines in imported oil.

Finally Carter strained to give voice to the cultural conservatism of the increasingly volatile middle- and working-classes but also to demonstrate that these issues were compatible with civil liberties and a commitment to social justice. No progressive agenda can presently be defended and few liberal politicians will survive unless they can address a whole series of issues which affect the quality of life and safety in the family, schools, and neighborhoods and unless they possess historically informed sensitivities to the role of religion in public as well as private life. Carter bore witness to the fact that a religious man can participate in politics guided by a religiously informed conscience but not bound by exclusivist authority—a point misunderstood by most liberals and ignored by Falwell and his ilk.

Carter's family life exemplified a remarkable degree of sharing and mutual respect and when he spoke of the family,

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he meant what he said. He worked for day-care tax credits, sought to make family welfare support more humane and initiated a conference to develop a consensual framework for more sensible government attitudes toward the family. This last was undermined as much by a pincer movement of the right and the left as by his own ineptness. He carefully sought a compromise on abortion, something the issue desperately needs, but satisfied neither feminists nor pro-lifers.

Had Carter succeeded in the creation of a new consensus linking the cultural conservative concerns with those of social justice, he would have done a great service to his party and to politics. As it is now, liberals and the left cannot seem to speak seriously to issues like the quality of education, drug abuse, pornography, bureacratic intervention in the family, the moral anguish over abortion, or safety in the schools and on the street. Bewildered and angry ex-senators want to create liberal hit squads, a move which will not be terribly successful, rather than carefully thinking through the issues on which they seem to be so vulnerable. There are many politicians who need to take heed of Carter's rhetoric and attempt on this score. His way certainly offers more cogency than that of Jerry Brown's splashing in to catch each new media wave or Edward Kennedy's eloquent resuscitation of a barren and discredited rhetoric.

Many people benefited from Carter's presidency; they should not forget. Many will continue to benefit as the legal and institutional legacy of his administration holds out against Reagan's onslaught; they should not forget. Many others are appalled by the new right but disillusioned by avant garde or bureaucratic liberalism; they should not forget. Others believe that the legitimate issues of the cultural conservatives can be addressed and constraints can be accommodated while pursuing a personal and institutional commitment to social justice; they will not forget.

THE ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND OUR NEW STRATEGIC DEBATE

What is the 'counterforce problem'?

The analysis that follows is excerpted from the first report by the Panel on U.S. Security and the Future of Arms Control, established a year ago by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. It is, we believe, an extremely clear, brief statement of an issue looming very large in current debates about military spending and arms control, and it succinctly outlines the assumptions involved in viewing the "counterforce problem" as a serious threat. Like the rest of the panel's work, this analysis is a consensus statement and does not take up the moral questions surrounding nuclear strategy or make recommendations (see our comments, "The Whirlpool of Weapons," Jan. 30). It has the advantage of being a description that satisfied the strategic specialists of differing viewpoints who served on the Carnegie panel. THE EDITORS

ONE OF THE MILITARY issues at the very center of the current arms debate is the "counterforce problem." The term "counterforce," of course, refers to the orientation of weapons or strategy toward the enemy's military forces, especially strategic nuclear forces, rather than toward industrial or population centers. Today's counterforce problem is largely reducible to the issue of the vulnerability of U.S. intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) to a Soviet first strike.

The concern that the Soviet Union might launch a counterforce attack against U.S. ICBM silos, submarines in port, and bombers not on alert is based upon three undisputed facts:

- Flight tests of ICBMs show that accuracy has reached the point where, when combined with explosive power, there is a very high probability of being able to destroy a fixed target, even if it is extremely well-protected by concrete.
- The Soviets have a great many more of such ICBMs and warheads than the U.S. (about three times as many hard-target killing warheads that can be quickly fired); and so, under certain assumptions, the Soviet Union could use only about one-third of its high-quality ICBMs with MIRVs (multiple warheads which can be independently targeted) to destroy virtually all U.S. ICBMs in concrete-hardened silos.
- The U.S. has no feasible way to protect its ICBMs from such a counterforce attack in the next several years except for a policy of launch-on-warning or launch-under-attack which some view as risky.

The assumptions and judgments that underpin the counterforce problem look like this: There is actual fighting in Europe or extreme tension between the Soviet Union and the United States, on the order of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 where there was a real chance of nuclear war. The point is that there is sufficient tension so that each side is bound to contemplate the possibility of the other side striking first. Under these circumstances, a Soviet planner could calculate that (a) the Soviets could launch about one-third of their high-quality ICBMs (say about 200 SS-18s, each with 10 warheads) with high confidence that these 2,000 warheads would destroy almost all of the 1,000 U.S. fixed ICBMs; (b) the Soviets could launch a

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small number of submarine-launched missiles (SLBMs) or other ICBMs against U.S. strategic bomber airfields and against U.S. ballistic missile-firing submarines in port with a high prospect of being able to destroy about fifty percent of the U.S. submarines and bombers; (c) there would be a reasonable chance of being able to keep initial American fatalities to under ten million.

From the Soviet planner's point of view, the U.S. president's problem would stem from the fact that after the Soviet attack, he would have only a few weapons (say between 50 and 150 warheads) that he could use quickly against hardened targets, with the remaining 3,000 to 4,000 warheads being good mainly against "soft" civilian and military targets or against hardened targets within several hours. The president would find himself in a quandary: either strike at Soviet cities and invite a counterattack on American cities or do nothing. The Soviet planner then could conclude that the likely U.S. choice would be to do nothing and to concede the issues that had prompted the crisis in the first place. Of the greatest political significance, the Soviet leadership (if it believed in this scenario) might also conclude that the very knowledge that the U.S. would face this quandary could make American leaders reluctant about standing up to Soviet challenges.

SOME FIND this scenario to be flawed technically and questionable in logic. For example, the president's choice is not necessarily limited to a prompt hard-target counterstrike or nothing. He could launch a slow hard-target counterstrike with the remaining bombers and cruise missiles. He also could launch a slow or prompt soft-target counterattack against military targets like airfields. In neither case would he be compelled to strike fully at Soviet cities. Indeed, he could order a strike against military targets near Soviet cities to inflict about the same number of casualties as the U.S. suffered in the Soviet first strike.

Others consider the scenario taking advantage of the U.S. counterforce problem to be highly implausible. They argue that once the situation is taken out of the hands of the Soviet planner and his computer and put into the meeting room of the Soviet leadership, the answers would be different. This is because Soviet leaders would find it extremely difficult to make certain other assumptions that are necessary for making the decision to attack:

First, they would have to assume they could carry out a perfect attack. As the chances for perfection decrease, as the prospect of actually being able to destroy almost all U.S. ICBMs lessens, the value of the whole enterprise drops off sharply. To make the assumption of perfection, Soviet leaders would have to believe that the split-second timing and coordination of hundreds of missiles could be achieved. They would have to believe that missile accuracy in tests conducted principally on an east-west axis could be duplicated by missiles flying north-south over the North Pole, where the effects of gravity and other forces would be somewhat different. They would also have to believe that the nuclear environment created by the first explosions would not cause subsequent attacking warheads to explode far short of their targets—the so-called problem of "fratricide." (Many nuclear experts would respond that there are sound technical reasons to believe that these problems can be resolved—indeed, have been resolved. Nonetheless, political leaders might well shrink from staking everything on the success of an immensely difficult attack.)

Second, even if Soviet leaders could assume perfection in a totally novel situation with the greatest of risks and stakes, they would also have to assume that an American president would simply allow U.S. ICBMs to be destroyed and not fire them before they were hit. In the kind of grave crisis postulated, U.S. forces would be on increased alert, and in particular, U.S. warning networks and command, control, and communications systems would be on a wartime footing. Within ten minutes or so, the president would know the size and destination of a Soviet attack. This knowledge would come from surveillance satellites and warning radars. The president would then be faced with the choice of either allowing the ICBMs to be destroyed or launching them against Soviet civilian centers or military targets (some of which would already have been fired). From Soviet eyes, what incentive would the president have for not firing the ICBMs before they were destroyed? (For a variety of reasons, such as not wanting to take any chances of launching when there *might* be some error in the warning system, U.S. leaders have refused to rely entirely on a launch-under-attack plan to deal with ICBM vulnerability. But in recent years, especially, they have called attention to the potential for doing this in order to add to Soviet uncertainties. Some Soviet spokesmen have stated that launch-under-attack figures prominently in Soviet strategic thinking.)

Third, Soviet leaders would have to assume that, even though millions of Americans would perish in this first Soviet counterforce attack, the president still would not choose to attack at least enough Soviet cities to even the score, whatever else he might do to retaliate against Soviet military forces. At that point, everything could get out of hand, and all the calculations about limiting the war would go up in flames. While it is theoretically possible to keep initial American casualities under ten million, they could be as high as twenty million. These would be people killed instantly. Many millions more would die later from radiation and other effects. What basis would Soviet leaders have for assuming that American leaders would consider this a "limited" or "surgical" attack, not calling for a response to "even the score"?

YET ANOTHER WAY of looking at this counterforce or ICBM vulnerability issue is to see it as being neither at the core of the Soviet-American strategic balance nor as a non-problem. Rather, the issue can be seen this way: Given that it is prudent to assume that there is some ICBM vulnerability, how should the United States plan its forces to deal with the problem? Those who take this approach say that the counterforce quandary is a classic case of the "fallacy of the excluded middle"—the U.S. is not faced with the dilemma of surrender

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or Armageddon, and therefore all arguments that depend on that premise are false. It does not follow, however, that the U.S. should not do anything about ICBM vulnerability because: (a) the Soviets might be willing to take "irrational" risks in a crisis; (b) many people believe in the fallacy and there is a problem of perceptions; and (c) it is better to try to preserve the land-based leg of the U.S. strategic triad than to try to assure the indefinite survivability and viability of the sea-based and bomber legs of the triad. (In other words, doing something about ICBM vulnerability is a hedge against Soviet technological breakthroughs that might make these other two legs vulnerable.)

The Carter administration's approach to the counterforce problem was to develop command, control, and communication capabilities and warning systems; to leave open the possibility of a launch-under-attack policy; and to move toward the deployment of the MX mobile missile system. This is a system which has one missile moving periodically into any one of twenty shelters. The idea is that the Soviets would have to fire two warheads at each of these shelters to have high confidence of destroying a single MX missile. When that problem is multiplied by 200, the number of deployed MX missiles, the Soviets would not have enough hard-target-killing warheads to destroy all MX missiles and still have many prompt hard-target warheads left in reserve. Thus, the idea is that the Soviets would be deterred from attacking the system in the first place.

Others believe that the Carter administration approach is too little, too late. They would deploy existing Minuteman missiles in a mobile system that in theory could be be ready a year or so before the MX system. There are other approaches under discussion—an anti-ballistic missile system to defend ICBM silos, other forms of mobile ICBMs, submarines that could be located just off-shore, and so on.

Stage

FUGARD'S LESSON

THE HOPE IS IN THE ART

WHEN ATHOL FUGARD came to the end of the experiments in group play-writing of the late 1960s, early 1970s — the years that produced his most direct social/political statements *(Sizwe Bansi Is Dead, The Island)* — he wrote *Dimetos*, an odd and oddly fascinating play which still baffles me when I re-read it. While he was working on it he told an interviewer (London *Sunday Times*, April 7, 1974) that for the first time he was writing a play "not about South Africa." Ostensibly, that is true; *Dimetos* is set in an unidentified country. Yet, when I hear Danilo describe the city as a place where "Crisis is obviously its permanent environment" and dismiss "Vision" ("A few old cranks and their young followers still keep that word alive. The rest of us muddle along as best we can") and when I see Dimetos in his self-selected isolation, I cannot help thinking of South Africa, of a country that has defeated the hopes that liberal whites and their black allies once had. Men of Alan Paton's generation once assumed that intelligence, right feeling, political action could build a bridge across apartheid, and Fugard, for all his dark sense of things, seemed to agree. It is presumptuous for someone sitting in Philadelphia, looking through the muddied veil of journalism, to decide what is or is not possible in a country half a world away, but all the reports suggest a chasm dividing black and white so great that the best impulses of South African reformers seem almost like quaint souvenirs of another period. *A Lesson from Aloes*, Fugard's most recent play, begins among those souvenirs.

The three characters in *Aloes* are veterans of the struggles in a cause that—for two of them at least — has come to seem false, a kind of ideological self-delusion that made their idealism and their sense of community appear to be politically important. The betrayal within their own camp and the complacent power of the government have retroactively robbed their activities, their allegiances of meaning. Steve Daniels, a colored leader of the party, has just returned from prison and is about to leave the country for good, to move his family to England. He had earlier violated a banning order, an isolating punishment which among other things refused him permission to attend social gatherings, by going to a party of friends, one of whom exposed him to the police which led to his arrest and imprisonment. Once there, broken by psychological torture — laughter not violence — he told the officials all that he knew, and has come to Piet, his Afrikander friend, either to find a fellow traitor or to receive forgiveness. Piet and his wife Gladys live in isolation, shunned by their old comrades, most of whom think he informed on Steve—wrongly, the play implies. Gladys, who never believed deeply in the cause, was a primly raised English girl, enticed from her shell by Piet (a personal image of what Piet and Steve hoped to do politically), liberated into vulnerability. When the secret police read her private diaries, the violation shattered her, and she is only now out of the asylum, making tentative attempts at reconstructing her life.

The play offers an inevitable comparison between Gladys's diaries — her past — and Steve's belongings, which he describes as scattered on the floor of his house, impossible to pack for emigration — his past. In twin scenes, Fugard provides each of them an image of rejection which may be more gesture than resolution. When Gladys discovers that Piet still has the receipt for the impounded diaries, she makes him tear it into tiny pieces. After Steve tells with great warmth about a giant fish he and his father caught when he was a boy, he then similarly tears up the photograph that triggered the memory. At the end, Gladys reveals that she has been unable to write in the new diary Piet has given her, to begin life again, and asks to be taken back to the asylum. For Steve, the move to England may be necessary for the welfare of his family, but for him it is Gladys's blank diary; he has earlier told the story of how his father dwindled away when the government's policy of forced

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relocation took him from his home by the sea. Piet, who remembers being unable to speak at the grave of a dead child on his drought-ridden farm, can find no words for Steve's departure. Piet, the one who has tried to hold onto the meaning in the old idealism, has escaped, retreated into the titular aloes, surrounding himself with species of this strange plant which manages to live under circumstances in which most plants die. Gladys, becoming specific about the play's symbol, asks if the price of survival is "thorns and bitterness." The play *is* about survival, but its images — Gladys's madness, the deaths equated with Steve's departure, even Piet's aloes — suggest what Fugard once said about *The Blood Knot*, that it was about "men who were going to try to live without hope, without appeal." That is not the way *The Blood Knot* affects me, but at the end of *Aloes* despair and pain do settle over the characters, the stage. If there is hope in the still living aloes, the predominant picture is of the parched land.

The real hope in *A Lesson from Aloes* lies in Fugard's art, not in his report on beleaguered idealism. The three characters in his new play have the strength, the vitality, the reality of Zach and Morrie in *The Blood Knot*, of Boesman and Lena in the play that bears their name, of the two prisoners in *The Island*. James Earl Jones, that redoubtable craftsman, occasionally seems a little calculated in his creation of Steve, but the result is impressive all the same. Harris Yulin's Piet is — properly, I think — an odd species of aloes, at once prickly and thornless. It is Maria Tucci's Gladys that is the revelation of this production. I have not seen her in recent years and, until I got to *Aloes*, I thought of her as the earnest and somewhat awkward actress who struggled not too successfully with that other troubled woman, Ruth Atkins in the McCarter production of *Beyond the Horizon*. But that was six years ago, and, if her Gladys is a proper gauge of the current state of her art, Tucci is an actress of great power. She does not play the character; she embodies her. Her Gladys is so fully realized that one wants to turn away in the early scenes, unable or unwilling to deal with this disturbed woman, but she pulls us back — to herself, to the trio, to the pain of the situation and the power of the play.

GERALD WEALES

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Screen

FIRST, AND LAST

TO GAG OR NOT TO GAG

IN *FIRST FAMILY*, director-writer Buck Henry has hit on a formula that he could repeat every four years just like Theodore White with his *Making of the President* books. In fact, it would be nice to have a new *First Family* at the end of each presidential term as a kind of antidote to White's sanctimony at the beginning. I can't imagine what the *First Family* of 1984 would be like, after four years of Reagan, but it certainly won't be the same movie Henry has made this time. This one is a comedy that could only have been made at the end of Carter's term in office.

The film is funny just as a political cartoon, a sight-gag summary of Carter's two crises. (To work up to six crises, you have to survive being kicked around a lot longer than Carter did.) Carter's crises were of course oil and hostages. These *First Family* condenses into a state visit to an African republic. The president goes there because the place is rich in some element America desperately needs, but the head of state repays the president's courtesy call by taking the occasion to seize his daughter for sacrifice to the local deity. True to the spirit of the Carter administration, Buck Henry's president has no new ideas about how to run the country. He just perpetuates the crude old idea that somehow the economy has to grow bigger each year. When his African host offers some fertilizer that produces sixty-foot celery and two-ton tomatoes, the president eagerly accepts. Unfortunately, for Carter, no such offer was made to him in time to save the election.

It's not as a political satire that *First Family* succeeds, though. No one could make a political satire on the Carter administration. There was nothing to satirize. Where *First Family* shrewdly puts its emphasis is on the domestic comedy. That's all the film is, really—a sit-com, Ozzie and Harriet in the White House. The film is funny because after four years of Jimmy Carter, the American public is the perfect audience for

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this joke. The family circle includes the president (Bob Newhart), his wife (Madeline Kahn), his horny daughter (Gilda Radner), and his Tweedle-Dee, Tweedle-Dum press secretaries (Jerry Hubbard and Richard Benjamin). Where the press secretaries are a kind of Jody Powell split in two, the daughter is Amy, Ms. Lillian and Billy all rolled into one. As the president himself, Bob Newhart couldn't be better cast. His comedy, like Carter's politics, is based on anti-charisma, on being understated to the point of banality.

No matter how you think of *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* — as sit-com, satire or whatever — it still isn't funny. In fact, it's the kind of failure that's downright embarrassing. Watching it makes your skin tingle and your teeth itch. You want to jump up and leave the room. During the first five minutes, which sends up life in the consumer society, the film looks vaguely appealing. The decorator touches are especially good, from the unbelievable shades of pink and yellow that Pat Kramer has painted her kitchen, to the robin's-egg blue and mint green polyester suits worn by her husband Vance (Charles Grodin). But as soon as Pat begins to atrophy, so do Jane Wagner's script and Joel Schumacher's direction of the film.

The film is loosely based on a novel called *The Shrinking Man*, which was made into *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, a fifties' movie that's campy now for its combination of clever special effects and scientific naiveté. The seeds of Wagner's script are already there, in the original version, in an implication that the hero's shrinking is some horrible side-effect of modern technology. This message is elaborated by *Shrinking Woman*, whose heroine literally drowns in a sea of laundry liquids, flavor enhancers, vaginal sprays, synthetic fabrics and miracle glues. Pat buys all this stuff at (as she puts it) "my very own shopping mall," which is conveniently located near her tract house in "Tasty Meadows." She's the ideal consumer, the prime-time market for the advertising copy written by her very own husband Vance. This makes her story into a kind of Gullible's Travels, an attempt at a contemporary version of Swiftian bile and malice.

A Swiftian potential has always inhered in the shrinking man's story, of course. But to take advantage of it, you have to have the courage of your conceits. From a Lilliputian perspective, as Swift well knew, human nature has a stench that's overpowering. The point of view demands a taste for jokes that are coarse and gross. It requires a misanthropy which Wagner, Schumacher and Tomlin all seem to lack.

In part the problem is that you can't be a misanthropist without being a misogynist in the bargain, and the filmmakers aren't willing to go that far. At the same time that they scorn consumerism, they have a soft spot in their hearts for feminism. This is the reason the shrinking man has undergone a sex change. Though Wagner's script may set Pat up as the goat of the joke at first, it later tries to turn her into a sheep, or rather a sacrificial lamb. This kills the joke altogether. On one hand, the movie pushes the idea of cultural conditioning to its ultimate extreme. Pat is what she eats, absolutely. On the other hand, though, Wagner wants us to pity her and take her emotions seriously. The result is that the vitriol in the movie is neutralized by the syrup. The attempt to turn the story toward pathos plunges it into bathos instead. In the end it is we who are shrinking, from Pat.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

SUSAN SONTAG INTERVIEWED BY ROGER COPELAND

The habits of consciousness

ROGER COPELAND: *I don't know if it's possible for a brief passage in a short story to sum up an entire body of work, at least not one that includes films, novels, and essays as well as short stories. But let me give it a try. There's a paragraph in your story, "Debriefing" which begins, "We know more than we can use. Look at all this stuff I've got in my head; rockets and Venetian churches, David Bowie and Diderot, nuoc nam and Big Macs, sunglasses and orgasms. How many newspapers and magazines do you read? For me, they're what candy or quaaludes or scream therapy are for my neighbors." Now here's what I'm getting at; regardless of whether you're writing about Sartre, Godard, Cioran, Syberberg, or Canetti, you seem to return obsessively to a single theme: the predatory habits of consciousness, the desire to hold the whole world in one's head. Do you agree?*

SUSAN SONTAG: Certainly. Consciousness as a form of acquisition; and the counter-projects of disburdenment and silence—the temptations of silence. These are unifying notions in my fiction and the essays. My first novel, *The Benefactor*, is about acquisition and disburdenment; and in *Death Kit*, the very notion of the kit, assembling the elements of a death, is another working out of this idea. "Unguided Tour," the last story in

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I, etcetera, is also about travel and tourism as a form of accumulation followed by a project of disburdenment. These ideas are not only obsessions and fantasies, but formal strategies as well. Ideas of this kind naturally give rise to disjunctive forms of writing, to the techniques of collage, assemblage, and inventory. In that sense, my work is an example of my thesis that form is a kind of content and content an aspect of form.

R.C. *Is it fair to say that the dilemma you describe in "Debriefing" is your own dilemma? One that you've experienced in an immediate, visceral way? I ask that in part because you own one of the most extraordinary personal libraries I've ever seen. It feels as if the entire history of the world is contained here in your apartment, and for all I know, here in your head. I can't help thinking of what you say about Elias Canetti in the last essay of your new collection***—that unlike Walter Benjamin who collected books as objects, Canetti's sole obsession was to put the content of the books inside his head. When you write about Canetti in that way are you also writing about yourself?*

S.S. There's a part of me that identifies with most of the people I write about; it's almost as if I'd invented them, as if they were fantasy projections of part of myself. Please understand that I'm not attempting to put myself on the same level with these people. But particularly with Canetti, I felt I had invented a figure to dramatize my own fantasies. I don't mean that what I say about Canetti isn't true; only that it's a very selective view of him. For example, I talk about the way Canetti must have projected a lot of himself into the figure of Kien, the "bookman" in his novel, *Auto-da-Fé*. And there were moments while working on the essay that I felt I was making Canetti into my Kien. Again, I don't mean to suggest that this isn't also a valid portrait of Canetti, but it *is* an invention, a construction—as is the portrait of Benjamin in the new book. To single out the melancholy element in his temperament is obviously limiting, but that's what I identify with. Certainly my relationship to books is more like Canetti's than Walter Benjamin's. You know, Benjamin once sold his complete edition of Kafka—and there was no writer he loved more than Kafka except perhaps for Proust—because he saw a rare book, an 18th Century children's book which he coveted as a beautiful object, not because it held any intellectual interest for him. But I don't have that sort of relation to books at all. My library is what I have in my head. Of course, like any person who's had a traditional education, I prefer hardcover to paperback because I like the way hardcover books feel in my hands; but basically I don't care at all about the difference. Any book, in any edition, as long as I can read it.

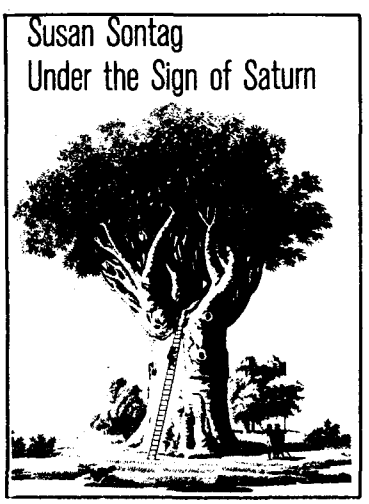
R.C. *Aside from those recurring images of acquisition and disburdenment, are you aware of any other similarities—either formal or thematic—between your fiction and your critical essays?*

S.S. Jean-Luc Godard once said that he wanted to make fiction films that are like documentaries and documentaries that are like fiction films. And I suppose—at least at one time—I would have said I wanted to write essays that are like fiction and fiction that has the quality of essays. I believe to some extent I have done that. I think of the essays in *Under the Sign of Saturn* as seven stories in essay form, seven portraits of consciousness. I suppose you could also say that the stories in *I, etcetera* contain essay elements.

R.C. *A few moments ago, you said that you identify strongly with the melancholic element in Benjamin's temperament. Something else that you seem to share with him is a fascination with certain surrealist ideas. I think it's in* On Photography *that you credit Benjamin with the most profound surrealist sensibility on record. What interests me about your definition of surrealism here—and in so many of your other essays—is that it has less to do with the actual content of dream life or the subconscious than with techniques of collage and radical juxtaposition, Lautreamont's sewing machine and umbrella meeting by chance on a dissecting table. What strikes you as surreal about Benjamin is his practice of collecting quotations, not any special interest in dreams.*

S.S. All of my essays, without exception, are attempts to ask what it means to be modern, to delineate the modern sensibility from as many different angles as possible. One of the names I've found for this sensibility is surrealism; but I'm aware of the fact that I conceive of surrealism in a very personal way. The reason I've always been so shy about allowing myself to be called a critic is that I know how eccentric these essays are—although I believe them to be true. The people officially called "Surrealists"—Breton and Company—all had a particular view of romantic love and a cult of woman with a capital "W." But this surrealist attitude toward love has absolutely left me cold, so I've simply left it out of my version of the surrealist sensibility.

In a sense, I suppose I stretched the term surrealism in much the same way I stretched the notion of camp so as to examine the phenomenon of dandyism in modern life. In "Notes on Camp," I was taking a piece of slang that had a certain currency in the homosexual world and trying to generalize it, to go beyond whatever meaning it might have had as a code word. Of course, I pulled back in horror when I learned that I'd hatched this "thing" that people wanted to transform into a commercial enterprise. The essay came at a moment when all this Warhol stuff was starting and people needed a catchphrase to describe it. But that of course wasn't what I was talking



**Under The Sign of Saturn*, by Susan Sontag, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $10.95, 204 pp.

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about at all; and I really felt my essay had been kidnapped, hijacked. Consequently, I haven't allowed that word to pass my lips since 1964—despite all the offers I've received to elaborate on or update the essay. Perhaps I latched onto the word surrealism fleeing from notions like camp and kitsch. Better to use a word that people won't get so excited about.

R.C. *We've talked about some of the concerns that you've voiced over and over again in many different contexts. But let me suggest one way in which I think your ideas have changed over the last several years. Elizabeth Hardwick wrote a very admiring profile of you in 1978; but she said something in it that struck me as terribly ironic: she thought she was praising you by writing, "Scarcely anyone is more alive to the* interesting. . . *" Now that might have been true in the mid-sixties; but in the last few years, it seems to me that you've become increasingly critical of the promiscuous way people use the word "interesting"—you seem to me to be arguing that it's not enough anymore to be merely "interesting." Am I right?*

S.S. Yes, you're quite right. I was astonished by Elizabeth's remark. She was 100 percent wrong. In fact, for a couple of years now, I've been accumulating notes toward a critique of this notion of "the interesting." It started with the sixth essay in *On Photography* where I argued that one of the ways in which photographs are untrue is that they make *everything* "interesting." And then, of course, in *Illness as Metaphor*, I talk about this 19th century notion that tuberculosis makes one more interesting. Actually, the first person to attack the idea of the interesting is Hegel. Early in the 19th century, it's already being proposed as a criterion for art; and Hegel says it's not enough.

R.C. *But certainly, at one point in time, you thought it was "enough," perhaps even preferable in some ways—or on some occasions—to "the truth."*

S.S. In the sixties, there was a whole period in my life when I was spending a lot of time with Jasper Johns, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, and Marcel Duchamp. "Interesting" was a favorite word of theirs; and in the mouths of people like Cage and Johns, the word sounded very glamorous and aristocratic. It was terrifically liberating for me to be with these people and hear their babble—I don't mean that condescendingly—it's just that they had a very special way of talking.

R.C. *I think I know what you mean. They all seemed to exude a sort of cool, detached, euphoria, a sophisticated cheerfulness. Cage is certainly one hell of an alternative to someone like Cioran—which explains, I suppose, why you contrasted the two of them in your essay on E.M. Cioran in* Styles of Radical Will. *Certainly, Cage is much more optimistic than Cioran; and he doesn't feel the least bit burdened by "history."*

S.S. I now think the juxtaposition of Cioran with Cage was sophistical. If I were to write about Cioran today, I would proceed rather differently. There's a political dimension to Cioran's pessimism that comes from having witnessed the failure of Communism in Eastern Europe. It became clear I situated his work in too abstract a way.

If there's been a real change in my views over the years, it's that I've had to give the historicist approach a more central role in my reaction to things.

R.C. *In your essay on Cioran, you seem to be lamenting the rise of historical consciousness in the 19th Century—Kleist's notion that there's no return to innocence, that we have no choice but to go to the very end of consciousness. And that of course is the same conception of history that helped bring the avant-garde into being, with one movement or "ism" displacing its predecessor at a dizzying rate of speed. Do you see any way off the avant-garde escalator? Or is the desire to somehow escape this cul-de-sac simply one more consequence of the avant-garde conception of history, more hunger for change?*

S.S. Today, we are living out the paradoxes of eschatological thinking. Actually, the various avant-garde "isms" were not supposed to replace one another. Each conceived of itself as the terminal "ism." But we've discovered that there is no terminal "ism"; the messiah doesn't come. History doesn't end—although particular histories end.

R.C. *But people today seem terribly eager to declare this phase of modernism dead and done with.*

S.S. Absolutely. And now one is obliged to start defending again the things that one had begun to take for granted. For example, in literature, John Gardner's dreadful book, *On Moral Fiction*, is only the most outrageous of the new manifestos declaring that modernism is over. Of course, these views are also moral and political. They suggest that this modern or experimental or avant-garde literature was elitist and that the only good writers are also commercially successful. And so, John Fowles and a lot of writers whose names I hardly know are the people Gardner proposes as the only serious writers. It seems that people don't want books—or any form of art—to be *hard*. They want art to be decorative. That's why photographs are so popular, because photographs seem easy to encounter and decipher. But the great achievements of 20th century art have been *hard*, demanding a certain kind of commitment, piety, and investment of attention.

It's not just that people want things to be easy; things that weren't so hard in the past seem more difficult today. I recently

Volumes of criticism by Susan Sontag mentioned in this interview are:

Against Interpretation (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $6.95)

Styles of Radical Will, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $10)

On Photography (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $7.95, 207 pp.)

Illness as Metaphor (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $5.95)

Volumes of fiction are:

The Benefactor (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $8.95)

Death Kit (New York: Signet, $2.95)

I, etcetera (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $8.95)

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met a young woman at a major university who is writing her Ph.D on Proust. This is her sixth year as a graduate student; and she asked me, "Don't you find it hard to read Proust—all those long sentences?" And I asked, "Hard compared to what? Kurt Vonnegut? Yeah, I guess it's harder than Kurt Vonnegut." I submit that twenty years ago, no graduate student in her sixth year at a well known university would even have been able to utter such a sentence. It wouldn't have been sayable. She would rather have gotten undressed in the middle of the street than say, shamelessly and rather wistfully, "Don't you think that Proust is kinda hard?" People don't even know what they can't say anymore. The whole question of decorum tells you a lot about where you are. It's not just what people do or feel; it's also what they think can be said. There are all sorts of changes like this, of people more and more finding things hard, of people not having the necessary energy.

R.C. *What accounts for that loss of energy, do you think?*

S.S. For one thing, the acceptance of television, the mentality and kind of attention that is the given of television. The condition of our attention, the condition of our seriousness has been progressively altered.

R.C. *Do you own a television set?*

S.S. No, never. Not even in 1950. For me, it's an absolutely visceral dislike. The first time I saw television, it just gave me a headache. I thought it was so dreadful to look at this tiny, out-of-focus image and than have everything interrupted all the time by commercials. You can tell me till the cows come home that I've missed this or that interesting program; but that doesn't justify it for me. I know this sounds terribly cranky and eccentric; very few people say this and even fewer of the people who say it actually live it. But I really think it's the death of western civilization. It's the death of literature, the death of literacy, and the death of politics. You can see the way people live now; it's different from the way they lived before.

R.C. *And you don't even feel a sociological curiosity about television? It's not that I imagine you putting down a book of Roland Barthes's because "Laverne and Shirley" is about to come on; but you're so attuned to the tenor of the culture, it surprises me that you never watch.*

S.S. I think that's an alibi. I think you're kidding yourself if you believe you're on top of it because you're looking at it sociologically or because you have an ironic relationship to it. What's actually happening is that it's destroying your ability to concentrate and pay attention. I'll match my detailed sociological knowledge of American popular culture and more against anyone's. But I don't believe for a minute that it's actually necessary for me to *watch* television. To know about America, you only have to travel around and listen to people *talk* about television. I do confess to reading television reviews; but I don't think I'd learn any more from actually watching television than I already know from movies, magazines, spending time with a lot of young people, and going to bars, rock concerts, and discos.

R.C. *I think what you're saying right now is going to surprise some of those children of the McLuhanite sixties who saw you as America's premier intellectual* swinger, *someone whose consciousness was large enough to take everything in without compromising its seriousness. After all, you were the intellectual who said it's all right to listen to the Supremes.*

S.S. But I haven't changed in that respect. Today, if it's not the Supremes, it's Bruce Springsteen. I'm still the same person, enjoying the same or an even greater range of pleasures. One of the chief ideas of modernism was this new relationship between high culture and popular culture. That goes back at least to Apollinaire. And it was my reiterating of this older, modernist position in the early sixties which seemed so distinctive because there was nobody else around who had my commitment to the traditional literary and philosophical culture who also seemed to know about these other things and to enjoy them. But I still think television is the enemy. The fact is, I don't think you can have *everything*. Whatever I said about high culture and the Supremes, they still have to be in certain proportions.

R.C. *Why is it, do you think, that people insist on putting you in one category or the other? Either they see you as the defender of some new barbarism or as a sort of closet Arnoldian, the "Eminent Victorian" as* The Village Voice *recently labeled you.*

S.S. One of the more discouraging reactions to my new book or to my recent work in general is that people always want to find some great change from the work of the sixties. I think it's part of everyone's over-eagerness to repudiate the sixties. I carry this fortuitous, journalistic label as a spokesperson for the sixties. So then if people continue to like the work I'm doing in the seventies and eighties, it has to be shown that I'm not really the person I was labeled as—the intellectual passionaria of the sixties—that I'm really humane or conservative.

R.C. *I remember Hilton Kramer's article in* The Times *after you published your piece on the aesthetics of fascism. He argued that you had repudiated your earlier commitment to aesthetic autonomy, that the new essay on Riefenstahl was at odds with what you said about "Triumph of the Will" in an older essay, "On Style". But I don't think you* ever *pitted the aesthetic and the ethical against one another.*

S.S. I don't think I did either. and who could? Of course, I *have* indulged myself from time to time in neo-Wildean sallies as one does sometimes when one gets impatient with other people's insensitivity to beauty. But it would be imbecilic simply to *defend* beauty or to contend that there is something called beauty which exists absolutely apart from any kind of historical coloring or ethical mandate. No one believed that, least of all Oscar Wilde, Baudelaire, Valéry, or Barthes.

R.C. *I'd be interested in hearing you talk about some of the less obvious influences on your work, less obvious than say, Ortega, the Bloomsbury Group, or the New Critics.*

S.S. Lionel Trilling, for one, was a great

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influence on me. "The Fate of Pleasure" particularly, was a major event in my life. The first time I read it, I just couldn't believe what I was reading, something that addressed so many of the problems I was worrying about. Even if I couldn't subscribe to the way he was resolving these questions, I felt that somebody was talking about the things that mattered. In fact, long before that, when I was a fifteen-year-old kid at North Hollywood High School, I discovered a newsstand on the corner of Hollywood and Highland that carried literary magazines. I'd never seen a literary magazine before; certainly I'd never seen anybody read one. I picked up *Partisan Review* and I started to read "Art and Fortune" by Lionel Trilling; and I just began to tremble with excitement. and from then on, my dream was to grow up, move to New York and write for *Partisan Review*. Then within a year, I'd read all the New Critics and had become a great fan of Kenneth Burke's. The following year I went to the University of Chicago where I became a student of Kenneth Burke's. Nobody knows that I was a student of Burke's.

R.C. *That's actually not as surprising as it sounds at first. There are some real similarities between you and Burke. You're both wide-ranging generalists, you're not academically pedigreed.*

S.S. He was the first *living* influence on me. I'd had many influences in my head from the time I was born till the time I was sixteen, from Edgar Allan Poe to Lionel Trilling—but the first person I met who exerted an influence on me was Kenneth Burke.

R.C. *Were you influenced by Burke's ideas about dramaturgy, or his conception of language as symbolic action?*

S.S. I think by temperament I was attracted to dramaturgical kinds of language. I think of the essays in *Under the Sign of Saturn* as *stagings* of a certain kind, dramatizations.

R.C. *Also, you've directed both films and plays. I understand you recently staged a Pirandello play in Italy.*

S.S. Yes, *As You Desire Me* for the National Theatre. And what I did with Pirandello is not so different from what I did with Canetti in the last essay of the book. What fascinates me about this Pirandello play is the theme of psychological cannibalism. So I moved the character played by Greta Garbo in the film version to the center of my production as a sort of queen bee who entraps the other characters; but ultimately she is their victim. Of course to do this, I had to leave a great deal out. But I think in some ways, I've made it into a better play than it really is. By finding something in it that is also part of my repository of fantasy, I could make a very strong experience out of it—but at the same time, a very limited, idiosyncratic experience. It's the same sort of thing I've done with Canetti. I've probably left out ninety percent of what Canetti is about. What's there in the essay is filtered through my temperament. It's . . . my Canetti.

Books: UTOPIA & A LAND OF PAIN

TOWARDS THE MOUNTAIN

Alan Paton

Scribner's, $6.95, 320 pp.

Edward Callan

THIS first volume of Alan Paton's autobiography brings the story of his private and public life to 1948. That crucial year saw the publication of his first novel, *Cry, the Beloved Country*; his resignation from the Principalship of Diepkloof Reformatory, a prison farm for black youths, which he had successfully transformed into a training school; and the accession to power in South Africa of the Afrikaner Nationalist Party on a platform of "Christian Nationalism" which identified the will of God with white supremacy.

Towards the Mountain takes its title from Isaiah's vision of ineffable justice — when the lion will lie down with the lamb — "where they shall not hurt or destroy in all that holy mountain." The title, therefore, makes an implicit theological point: that whereas individual souls may aspire towards a beatific vision out of reach in time, time-bound collectives — the nations or races of the earthly city — cannot attain perfection. The belief that they can is a utopian delusion.

Published in November 1980, the month in which the Moral Majority rallied the elect among the electorate, Paton's book may be timely for American readers; for it tells how three separate utopian visions — each marked by a measure of authoritarianism, undue constraint, or injustice — touched on his life. The first was that of the Christadelphians, the fundamentalist sect in which he grew up. Its members were law-abiding and uncompromisingly pacifist; but they forbade marriage with outsiders, regarded themselves as an elect, and looked forward to an earthly millennium when the worthy would enter the Kingdom.

In his university days Paton separated himself from the Christadelphians and joined Methodist friends in the Students' Christian Association; and later, as a teacher, he was active in YMCA, TOC-H, and related religious movements. He was then sought only by the Oxford Group, a moral reform movement seeking to establish itself in South Africa. "Its aim," says Paton, "was utopian, nothing less than the salvation of the human race. For this reason it selected key men and women for its targets, for if they were reconverted, their countries would turn to the ways of righteousness and peace." Their relentless pursuit, which reminded him of Francis Thompson's "Hound of

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Heaven," deterred him from joining the Oxford Group: "I knew that if the hunters caught me they would love me. I knew that if they did not catch me they would love me, but not much." He found a matching relentlessness in the South African Security Police: "They have the same inexorability of purpose, the same intensity of gaze. They are hunting too, but if they catch you it will not be to love you."

Paton was constantly accompanied by the Security Police when he was President of the Liberal Party in the 1960s. But that is not part of the story of *Towards the Mountain* which traces the rise of Afrikaner Christian Nationalism only to the 1948 election victory, the prelude to an era in which "a new breed of Afrikaners were going to make fierce laws to achieve utopian purposes." The task the new Government set itself, says Paton, was "nothing less than to fashion not only the perfect society, but one which would endure into foreseeable time, one in which every race would be allotted its place and its function . . . So noble was the end . . . so sublime the goal, that almost any means became justifiable. The Christian rulers of Afrikanersdom began to observe the un-Christian precept that the end justifies the means."

Paton came to the writing of *Towards the Mountain* with a clear perception of the ways in which apartheid constitutes a challenge to Christian principles; for this book is his third major essay in biography set against the historical background of the rise of Afrikaner nationalism. The first of these was *A South African Tragedy: The Life and Times of Jan Hofmeyr* (1964) — the biography of the wartime Deputy Prime Minister whose earlier efforts to reform the South African penal system gave Paton the opportunity to use increasing freedoms as his reformatory instrument at Diepkloof. The second was *Apartheid and the Archbishop* (1973) — the life of Geoffrey Clayton, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, who was reluctantly but steadily drawn to act in the political sphere.

Both biographies show Paton's keen interest in the successive stages of spiritual growth that brought his subjects into conflict with the apartheid mentality. His biographical method requires, therefore, simultaneous consideration of private and public life — a method he employs also in this autobiography.

As a personal history, *Towards the Mountain* treats of conflict with an authoritarian father who lived by a narrow morality, led a disappointed life, and died tragically: his corpse half-submerged in a mountain stream, stripped of possessions, and undiscovered for several weeks. And it also treats, in turn, of the discovery of the world of books, of sexuality, and of first love for a married woman whom he married when her husband died. It gives proportionate weight to the endeavors that first brought him a measure of public interest: his work as a penal reformer, and his writing of *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

Its earliest chapters record an intense childhood delight in nature: "I cannot describe my early response to the beauty of hill and stream and tree as anything less than ecstasy" — a declaration that comes to mind in a closing chapter where Paton describes the passage from which — together with his California hosts — he derived the title for his first great novel, written in hotel rooms and on trains during a tour of panel institutions in Scandinavia, Canada, and the United States: "Cry, the beloved country, for the unborn child that is the inheritor of our fear. Let him not love the earth too deeply. . . . Let him not be too moved when the birds of his land are singing, nor give too much of his heart to a mountain or a valley. For fear will rob him of all if he gives too much."

This passage suggests, says Paton, that if the child loves the earth too deeply he cannot ask immunity from pain: "This is what the visitors from America and Britain and Germany and other countries mean when they say to me, "Ah, but your country is beautiful." They mean, "But why is it so full of pain?" And he adds: "I am sometimes astonished when I remember that these words were written in 1946, and that it took many of the white people of South Africa thirty years to acknowledge their truth, when black school children started rioting in the great black city of Soweto on June 16, 1976, on the day after which, of all the hundred thousand days of our written history, nothing would be the same again."

Now, as of January 11, 1981, Alan Paton is seventy-eight years old and no longer active in national politics since the Liberal Party was forced to disband by a law forbidding racially mixed politics. He has begun to write fiction again and is now completing a novel set in the early sixties. It is to be called, *Ah, But Your Country is Beautiful*, and may form part of a trilogy dealing with those years. He also continues to help edit *Reality: A Journal of Liberal Opinion* which is in some respects a successor — of equally limited circulation — to the often banned Liberal Party journal, *Contact*. As for the rest of his autobiography, he says: "The second part of my life I hope to write before I die." Since there will be no writing on that holy mountain, readers of this volume may be prompted to urge: "Absent thee from felicity a while. . . ."

Dual drives of Christian faith

STORIES OF FAITH

John Shea
Thomas More Press, $10.95, 228 pp.

Robert A. Ludwig

THERE ARE FEW if any authors on the current scene who blend the heady insights of the academic study of religion with the insider's faith perspective as effectively as does Chicago priest John Shea. His ability to combine the results of history-of-religions scholarship, New Testament studies, and a genuine pastoral concern for personal faith, and to write in a clear, readable and imaginative style is rarely matched in today's religious titles. Shea's earlier works (*The Challenge of Jesus*, 1975; *Stories of God: An Unauthorized Biography*, 1978; *The God Who Fell From Heaven*, 1979) demonstrated his unique talent as an intelligent apologist for twentieth-century

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I also believe that a training in the more exact sciences has a great influence on one's literary style, not to make it more exact, but to make it more simple and more clear. Such training teaches the writer to avoid overembellishment and extravagance. Its only danger is that it may influence the writer to become too spare.

—Alan Paton
Towards The Mountain

Christian faith by their creative exploration of Christian origins and the contemporary quest for meaning. This newest book renews that exploration and leaves little doubt that its author is an important spokesman, very capable in translating theological research into the experience and language of ordinary believers, inviting his readers into a deeper awareness of both the Mystery of God and themselves by a sympathetic yet critical examination of the process of faith itself.

Stories of Faith is "a meditation on the dual drives of Christian faith: toward God and toward Jesus," and in it the reader is gently seduced into contact with both by the skillful exploration of the faith journey in and through ordinary human experience. We are taken from "what is close at hand" (a businessman looking toward retirement, a college student caught up in the idealism of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and a son at the bedside of his dying father—all of them considering their situations in life), through a thoughtful analysis of the revelation-faith process at work in these various subjects, toward a well-informed reflection on biblical faith and the meaning disclosed in Jesus of Nazareth.

Biblical faith is characterized by its steadfastness, its claim that God is faithful in his graciousness even in circumstances where evidence of that faithfulness is lacking. The journey which begins in the awareness that one is "bonded to Mystery," involved in a real relationship with ultimate and gracious Mystery, leads one inevitably toward the moment when the meaning disclosed is tested and the perceived graciousness in doubt. Abraham, Job, and Jesus are cited as examples of the "despite everything" quality of biblical faith which affirms the ultimate graciousness of the relationship even when not understanding the ways of graciousness. Faith does not mean protection from harm, nor does it provide a clean explanation for life's ambiguities. It is a subtler sense "that we are never alone and that no power which seeks to destroy us has a final claim." Faith becomes the power to overcome all that oppresses us, transforming the trials of life and death into a passionate hope which enlivens our imagination in our search for the possible.

Christian faith focuses on Jesus of Nazareth and its center is "retelling the Jesus stories so that the life of the teller is interwoven with the tale." This interweaving of our stories with the story of Jesus maps more clearly the journey of faith. "Jesus is the forerunner, trailblazer, pioneer, pathfinder" to whom we look to both affirm and critique our experiences of God. Beyond the ways of admiration, imitation, and explanation which characterized the christologies of the recent past, the reader is invited to contact Jesus, to encounter him in his own faith journey, to experience him in all of his humanness-striving-for-meaning, and therein to be transformed: "The preposition 'through' is key to the experience of Jesus. Jesus is not to be stopped at or stared at; he is gone through. . . . The story of Jesus is the story of faith in the concrete. He is the visibility of the invisible movement of God; and contact with him means the specification of God's intention and the spark to go on."

The concluding chapters of Shea's book are a moving attempt to "sing" the meaning and message of Jesus as forerunner of the faith journey—a poetic "resymbolization" of the story of Jesus which seeks to recapture him in the light of present experiences of the Spirit. Jesus is portrayed as an indiscriminate host inviting everyone to the banquet, the Son who must die in revealing the vulnerability of God, and the storyteller of God whose own life became one. In these chapters and throughout the book the

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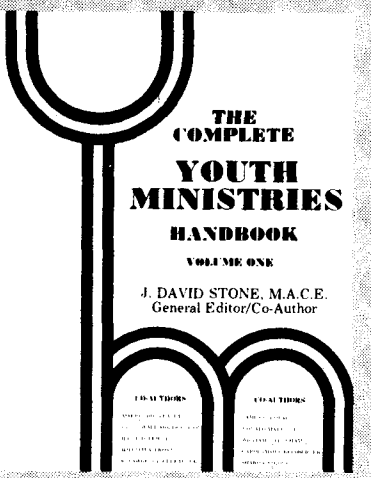

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Faith in Jesus is a process of relating our own lives to his life story. It is a procedure of going through him into the Spirit and on to the Father. As faith in God entailed an inner process of handing life over and receiving it back, so faith in Jesus entails a process of handing power over to his story and receiving it back into our own. We allow the life story of Jesus to focus the areas of importance in human life and to give a perspective on those areas. In no way do we give up our critical faculties but we allow the story to guide and sharpen their use. The story of Jesus which is the initial partner in this dialogue is the historical portrait. The Jesus of history is the Christ of faith for today because it is to him that we come with our lives.

—John Shea
Stories of Faith

reader is likely to catch himself doing what Shea does so masterfully: discovering meaning through a dialogue between our stories and the story of Jesus. The New Testament is broken open for the reader himself to inhabit.

This book should find a wide audience. It is not a theological treatise of pristine authority, though it does attempt to "get back" to the vitality of Jesus that generated the Christian movement. It is intended for "ministers, teachers, students, parents, and all who find the question of God unavoidable and the attraction of Jesus irresistible." I would recommend it as a possible text for college-level courses, for continuing education of ministers, and for more sophisticated adult education groups. It has too much depth and hard analysis to be considered light reading, but the depth it points to is universal in human experience and its analysis is refreshingly lucid. Since its focus is the dynamic of the redemptive relationship, a certain amount of experience seems necessary. But since the dynamic begins in the ordinary affairs of human interaction, prior theological expertise is not a prerequisite for understanding its content. What does seem necessary is for the reader to be open to understanding "faith" as a verb and Christian faith as concerned more with current meaning in the midst of our own stories than with factual accuracy in journaling events from the past. *Stories of Faith* does not celebrate the past, but looks to its narratives to help moderns rediscover depth and meaning in their stories, and to lead them toward a radical commitment to travel with Jesus in his faith-revelation of a gracious God "despite everything."

Living with the terror of doubt

MASTERPIECES

Walter Cahn

Princeton, $14.50, 168 pp.

A FABLE OF MODERN ART

Dore Ashton

Thames and Hudson, $17.95, 128 pp.

Richard L. Schoenwald

"ANYTHING that is too difficult for a person to do:" so a dictionary published in London in the 1750's defined "masterpiece." Too difficult for an ordinary person, for you and me, but not for the specially gifted, the lightning-anointed: we call them Lou Gehrig, or Bjorn Borg, or Gaugin or van Gogh. They have hands, muscles, eyes—have not we all?—but with those hands, muscles, eyes they capture the sights, sensations, feelings that wash over us and everlastingly wash away.

The idea of the masterpiece emerged slowly in the West, according to Walter Cahn, who is Professor of the History of Art at Yale. Medieval guilds demanded a demonstration of excellence as proof that a young aspirant might enter their ranks, and as insurance that these ranks should not become overcrowded: let a would-be master sculptor make one of these: " 'a Jesus Christ in stone, entirely naked, showing his wounds, wearing a little loincloth, with wounds appearing on his hands, side and feet, a crown of thorns on his head, and with a good and pitiful countenance, the entire work measuring five and one-half feet in height; or an image of Our Lady holding her Child in her arms, the same height as the above, handsome in appearance and dress; or other good images of Saint Barbara, Saint Margaret or Saint Catherine . . .' "

Later, Renaissance thinkers considered "God as the supreme artist and man as His supreme creation." When God became a practitioner, he turned artisanry into artistry. "In creating man," Cahn paraphrases the painter and historian Vasari, "God established the perfect model from which painting and sculpture derive." The first use discovered by Cahn of "masterpiece" as a term of praise for high human artistry, not just guild-joining proficiency, dates from 1481. Artists in the sixteenth century, especially under the patronage of Margaret of Austria, fused the old idea of creating an outstanding object with a newer ambition, that such an object must rival the best achieved in the past. The sandlot craftsman was changing into Willie Stargell, someone who did not flashily begin his working life by hitting a few homers, but who managed season after season to demonstrate supreme power and control. The medieval testpiece, accomplished early, changed into a masterpiece, one of a series of works of ever increasing skill and impact.

But how could a masterpiece be recognized for sure? The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries scrutinized the past and picked certain overwhelming works, such as the Laocoön, the Last Supper, Michelangelo's Last Judgment. This era also made certain artists, and especially Raphael, into embodiments of what an artist should be, a consistent producer of hits. Even the nineteenth century treasured the comforting certainty that real value could be detected unfailingly.

Yet the rising number of artists, and the growing size of audiences, caused such assurance to crumble. Cahn ends his book with list after list of masterpieces thought up by writers on art in the nineteenth century, and with Zola's fascinated attention, not for aesthetic consideration or matters of skill, but for the

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Masterpieces in a time which has not yet become a past will be masterpieces of publicists and seers. They will be works of genius and travesties, one mocking the other and mocked in return. After the last residues of Romantic emotion have been deflated, deflation itself will breed new and equally tenacious residues, to be demoted in their turn. The quality of mastery is subject to an endless process of redefinition. But symbols of permanence have other, more mysterious ways. They must be sustained by metaphysical certitudes, and these are in short supply.

Walter Cahn
Masterpieces

likes and dislikes of the audience at an exhibition. The mob, the crowd, the masses, the bourgeoisie: confronting them, many artists withdrew and sought inside themselves a criterion by which to know whether they had created a masterpiece.

Balzac's short story "The Unknown Masterpiece" dominates the close of Cahn's book and the start of Ashton's. A painter labors for years on a single picture that he has shown to no one. When at last he discloses it to younger colleagues, they find it a meaningless jumble of lines amid which they can make out a single perfectly painted foot. The painter burns his work and dies. Why had he not known—known what? That he was not fashioning a masterpiece? But who could have told him, who in the unfeeling frenzy of the modern world? Then he had to trust to his own vision, and his own appraisal of that vision, and he had to bear the persistent pain of doubt. Art now meant risk, the risk of everything, even of life itself, as well as the promise and the solidarity of real achievement.

Many artists have felt the power of Balzac's tale, and Ashton, who is Professor of Art History at Cooper Union, seems to have wanted to unite essays on important creative figures by linking them to this story. She glimpses but does not really deal with the central problem of modern art, one that Balzac caught sight of, one that certainly drew people like Cézanne to identify themselves with Balzac's painter. The masterpieces of the past spoke clearly and roused many to acclaim them, as Cahn shows: why then must modern art prove so difficult, even unintelligible?

Ashton does suggest that at least the figures whom she treats—Cézanne, Rilke, Picasso, Schoenberg—saw their goal as spiritual; they aimed beyond this world, and simply did not want to communicate offhandedly with an audience unwilling to sweat. However, she misses the real point: in the world of the guilds, of Leonardo, Raphael, Titian, God existed, and men proceeded from the assumption that He did. Art was tightly linked to spirit, and so it mattered to most people because they were believers in spirit. In the world of the impressionists and all their successors, right down to this moment, God has turned into a possibility, a question, or an impossibility.

Picasso said it all, as quoted in an anthology edited by Professor Ashton: "Something holy, that's it. . . . It's a word something like that we should be able to use, but people would take it the wrong way. You ought to be able to say that a painting is as it is, with its capacity to move us, because it is as though it were touched by God. But people would think it a sham. And yet that is what's nearest the truth."

Where can the artist turn now? He turns to watch the crowd, as Zola did, or he hastens to keep up with his peers. If he rejects these strategies, he can only depend on himself, and such reliance must lead him precisely to the situation of Balzac's painter. Modern art demands risk-taking on the grandest scale imaginable. To live always with doubt, with the terror that a meaningless jumble may result: what courage, how much of Hemingway's "grace under pressure" it takes! Many in the crowds who now throng museums sense that modern art results from this epic struggle, and value it as testimony that the realm of the spirit has not yet been annihilated.

A larger orchestration

THE MIDDLE GROUND

Margaret Drabble

Alfred A. Knopf, $10.95, 277 pp.

Thomas F. Staley

The Middle Ground is Margaret Drabble's ninth novel and her most complex and technically ambitious work. It is both an extension and an elaboration of her sustained chronicle of urban life over the past two decades—a period for women of hope, freedom, and challenge amid enormous tension and struggle. *The Middle Ground*, as its title suggests, is a novel of temporal and spatial perspective. While its characters explore their past and present and seek to assess their lives from the vantage point of early middle age, the novel more generally expresses a sustained commentary on the complex social and moral world they inhabit.

All of Drabble's novels reflect her intense interest in contemporary themes and subject matter, for she writes in the tradition of English realists like Arnold Bennett. Her earlier novels, however, were narrow in scope, close psychological portraits of bright and promising young women down from university who were coming of age in the heady atmosphere of rising expectations that characterized the early sixties in England. But as Drabble's women entered the mainstream of life in the late sixties and early seventies, her themes and concerns became larger, more topical and

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sociological. She is still, however, deeply interested in her individual characters, and *The Middle Ground* reflects a struggle for form, an attempt to accommodate the the author's impulse to probe deeply the individual consciousness and at the same time look more broadly at the pulse of society at large. This is an ambitious challenge that Drabble has set for herself, for she runs the risk of having her characters become fragmentary and even dissolve into the dismal exterior landscape she paints. The risks are worth taking, but only marginally successful.

Kate Armstrong, the central figure of *The Middle Ground*, is a widely read journalist, a well paid observer of the chaos of contemporary life. She is the woman who has made it on her own terms, but as she looks around her and at her past she is not sure of its triumph. She began her career by writing of the trials and pitfalls of women, but she has become bored with the subject; she yearns in a way to command more substantial, more interesting subjects like her friend and fellow journalist, Hugo, who is an expert on the Middle East. But she sees both in herself and in Hugo and in her ex-lover, Ted, that professional success and recognition has little to do one way or the other with personal and domestic stability.

Kate's personal life bears the cumulative scars of Drabble's earlier heroines; she looks back on a broken marriage, an abortion, a succession of lovers, with guilt and wonder. Because Drabble attempts to raise such large questions and touch on so many topics, Kate comes dangerously close to becoming a type rather than an individual. Nearly all of Drabble's characters are burdened by her concern to engage the full spectrum of contemporary life, which comes close to diminishing them as individuals. This tendency is saved, sometimes just barely, by her remarkable skill in drawing characters with short adroit brush strokes, by creating brief imaginative scenes that give life to a character. But the narrative shifting between the individual consciousness and the wide range of social issues in *The Middle Ground* is not well fused, even jarring. It is as though at times the author cannot make up her mind just how she wishes to render reality in the novel, through the individual consciousness or with a broad panoramic sweep.

The major metaphor of *The Middle Ground*, on the other hand, is a remarkable construction, the sewer system, the subterranean network that carries away the waste of civilization. As a trope the sewer is effective in its humor, irony, and thematic implications. The exterior world of this novel, the London metroscape, is a world that seems to consume and digest itself so rapidly that man can no longer dispose of the overwhelming effulgence that he produces. Kate remembers how eloquently her father used to speak of the efficiency of the London sewer system. But now we seem to have progressed beyond our efficiency—the implications are both comic and horrifying. The sewer's incapacity is only a symptom of a growing inability to cope.

Through Kate and a small group of other characters whose lives are very close to hers, Drabble attempts to locate the general malaise of the present from the prospect of the middle ground of early middle age where one cannot turn exclusively to the past for clarity or look with illusions to the future. To entertain this prospect Drabble borrows a page or two from the techniques of Virginia Woolf, and they are well used. Through Kate she is able to extend past and present and broaden the themes of the novel and at the same time create a character of wit, intelligence, and deep sympathy.

The seams of *The Middle Ground* are not so well sewn as in Drabble's earlier novels, but this is a work of far more technical ambition and a larger orchestration of more complex and subtle themes. Drabble is still, however, in search for a form that can accommodate her two impulses. The novel demonstrates not only Drabble's acute observations of the representative artifacts of contemporary civilizations, of which we knew, but her willingness to struggle for a more complex form that her subject matter and themes demand.

REVIEWERS

EDWARD CALLAN, *professor of English at Western Michigan University, compiled Alan Paton's political writings in* The Long View. *His most recent book is* Yeats on Yeats *(Dolmen Press, Ireland).*

ROBERT A. LUDWIG *is assistant director of University Ministry at Loyola University, Chicago, and adjunct professor in the Institute of Pastoral Studies, teaching courses in pastoral theology and New Testament.*

RICHARD L. SCHOENWALD *teaches in the history department of Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh.*

THOMAS F. STALEY *is Trustees Professor of Modern Literature at the University of Tulsa, and author of* Jean Rhys: A Critical Study.

ANNE FREMANTLE *is the author of* Women's Way to God *(St. Martin's Press), among others.*

In Brief

DEATH AND EXISTENCE: A CONCEPTUAL HISTORY OF HUMAN MORALITY, *by James P. Carse, John Wiley, $23.95, 473 pp.*

Professor Carse originally gave the lectures upon which he has based his systematic survey of ten distinct conceptions of death, some ten years ago. He quotes a student telling him that he signed up for this course "because I knew there was absolutely nothing I could learn from it." A remark that now seems "prophetically apt." For that "death is a subject about which nothing can be learned" is itself exceedingly valuable to learn. So just what is this book?

Dr. Carse begins his critical study of "ten major conceptions of death" with Plato and Aristotle, but it is when he compares the atomic theory of Epicurus with Schröndinger and Monod that he really becomes luminous. He inquires into "the capacity of scientific theory to embrace the randomness or spontaneity that seems to make life distinct from other natural phenomena." And he cites slime mold, whose individual spores "do not act because they are organized; the fact that they act in this way *is* their organization." With what Carse calls "astonishing similarity to Epicurus" Monod argues that all phenomena, living and unliving, "are subject simultaneously to chance and necessity." Death is no problem for Monod since "it brings

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nothing to an end'' For, as Epicurus taught ''nothing comes from nothing.'' So, within the sciences, ''persons neither live nor die; in fact, thy are not even persons, only continuous entities.'' Thus, the scientific response, as the Epicurean, to life and death, is *disregard*. Dr. Carse goes on to consider life as separation (the mystical view); the Freudian discovery of causally discontinuous space in human existence; then death as illusion (Hinduism); death as fiction (Buddhism); as inevitable (the Judaic view) as transformation (the Christian view). Finally, he considers various individual attitudes to death from Jung and Kierkegaard to Sartre. This is a most nourishing book.

ANNE FREMANTLE

Correspondence

(Continued from page 66)

letter of the law and very little on the spirit of the law. There is a shortsightedness in the perception that practicing birth control is tantamount to turning away from God. As anyone who is alive knows, reality can impose its own kind of restrictions on one's ability to reach an ideal (if this is an ideal). Financial problems, family stability, military service, illness or other trauma will often dictate a greater or more immediate need to be served.

The present conditions of ambiguity in the church tend to spawn the ''do it yourself'' brand of Catholicism and greatly undermines the ability of Rome's authoritative voice to be taken seriously. Wouldn't it be more fruitful for our hierarchy to emphasize the right motivation in a person's decision to use birth control, one based on unselfishness and love for the existing members of the family and their collective ''life?''

Those of us who have been decisive about remaining within the Catholic church despite a conviction that we can't accept this narrow view of birth control, have a burdensome task for which we are also responsible, that of guiding our children along paths of right conscience. Unfortunately, this cannot wait until the day dawns when the intellects are all satisfied and in accord on the subject.

MARY ALICE LOWRANCE

Trade & aid

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: I was pleased to see *Commonweal* giving particular attention to the so far largely ignored reports of the Brandt Commission and the Presidential Commission on World Hunger [Dec. 19]. There has been little comment on these important documents in liberal publications of any persuasion. Unfortunately, there is even less likelihood of much action by the incoming administration along the lines the reports recommend — partly because they will suffer the fate of reports commissioned by or published during a preceding administration and partly because the new power structure in Washington will not be sympathetic to their recommendations.

While I would take issue with some aspects of *Commonweal*'s interpretation of the two reports, I feel sure that members of the Commissions and their staffs will be far more able to defend them and to comment on inferences than I am. The editorial's criticism of AID and World Bank programs is, I feel, far too sweeping, even though the examples cited may not be inaccurate.

A point I would like to make, however, supports both the underlying thesis of the Linowitz Commission's report and *Commonweal*'s critique of it: that the basic problem of hunger is poverty and that poverty results from inequitable distribution of income (obviously), wealth, and (not so obviously) power. What this implies but does not say, is that development assistance—what your editorial calls ''U.S. aid efforts''—is not the only, or even the major, way in which the United States affects ''rural majorities in third-world nations.'' Their situation is influenced far more by trade and foreign private investment policies of the United States and other industrialized countries. The Linowitz Commission wanted to ensure that no U.S. government policy would encourage action subject to its influence or regulation to impair further the quality of life of the rural poor; preferably it would encourage action to influence it.

AID has a clear policy directive in support of land reform and related programs; but these may indeed run counter to short-term U.S. foreign policy, as in the Philippines and elsewhere—in which case they do not prevail. But U.S. trade and private investment transfer far more resources into (and out of) developing countries than foreign aid does. What good is a small-scale crop production project in a food-deficit country which is using its land or leasing it to foreign investors to export a cash crop to the markets of the industrialized countries instead of producing food for the people at home?

You are correct in saying that it is the *structure* of the international economic system that needs to be changed. What I found understated in the editorial—but somewhat less so in the reports—was an appreciation of the full spectrum of influences on that system.

MARTIN M. McLAUGHLIN
Senior Fellow
Overseas Development Council

Religion & rethinking

Worcester, Mass.

To the Editors: Jim Castelli's quick report on religion and the 1980 election was most helpful [Nov. 21]. His conclusion that ''it was not religion's most noble side that we saw'' during this election year is surely justified, as is his caution against hasty interpretation of the results. The Catholic vote came in conservative, but the nature of that conservatism needs to be carefully analyzed. While Reagan appealed to the concern of many Americans with traditional moral values, no one need conclude that those Americans have been permanently captured by the New Right. Nor need one believe that Roman Catholics who voted for Reagan are unconcerned about social justice and world peace. Carl Henry has already begun to mobilize evangelical leadership to discuss the political perspectives of conservative Christianity, a process which should make the humane side of conservative theology more visible and call to account the moral

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majority and its leaders. Responsible Catholics would do well to emulate his initiative and begin exploring ways in which contemporary church teaching on the dignity of the human person enlightens discussion of the public issues which most concern the voters, notably economic instability and an inconsistent and undirected foreign policy. To do so, church leaders will have to work harder at explaining their views on economic justice and military restraint, while at the same time taking with more seriousness and sophistication than they have in the past the issues of abortion, family life, and public decency addressed by the New Right.

The recent election will turn out to be a blessing if (1) it forces liberal Catholics to evaluate more critically the excessive individualism of secular liberalism on a constellation of issues which include ERA, abortion, gay rights, and affirmative action and (2) it persuades church leaders that political responsibility for the church begins beyond the boundaries of elections in the formation of the political culture which expresses itself in election returns and public policies. The huge bloc of non-voters, the volatility of significant segments of the electorate, as well as the results themselves, all relate to wider realities of political consciousness and organization, education, information, and poverty.

The church engages the political order in its proclamation of the truths of its tradition and the formation of communities of faith and conscience, as well as in its direct efforts to relieve the needy and empower the powerless. Most of the time we discuss evangelization, liturgy, education, pastoral ministry, and church governance apart from any consideration of the concrete social and cultural circumstances of the church in the United States. By doing so, we doom the church's political witness to triviality.

The roots of the *de facto* marginalization of progressive Catholic action in the United States lie in the conscious or unconscious acceptance of the contemporary segregation of "religion" from the worlds of work, culture, politics, and society. The road to effective Catholic presence lies not in this or that political party or movement, but in a political understanding of faith, worship, and community. We have allowed the language of "political theology" to be captured by groups with little stake in the church, its parishes or its people, ignoring the fact that such a theology has to do primarily with an intelligent pastoral approach to church life and mission.

Social analysis instead of being seen as a normal element of pastoral work is linked only to social action; social action is seen as peripheral to Catholic life or a laudable pursuit for those who are interested; thus we force most Catholics to accept notions and programs of prayer, sacraments, ministry, and mission which are simply unconnected with the realities of everyday life.

Until our church begins to understand that the central teaching of the worth and the dignity of the human person integrates all of Christian life, a specific Catholic political presence which is more than a butt for cartoonists will be an impossibility. This means that we in the church need to give a high priority to pastoral renewal, development of forms of consultation, and consideration of new strategies of social and political action which incorporate lay experience, expertise, and leadership. The road to political responsibility leads through and not away from the Catholic people, to the heart of faith and to the roots of community, not to their fringe. The first task of the church as a political institution in a free and pluralistic society is to be fully and completely the church.

DAVID J. O'BRIEN
Dept. of History
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Springfield, Mass.

Belgian complexities

To the Editors: As a resident of Belgium from 1975-1979 and a former student of both the *Katholiek Universiteit te Leuven* and the *Université Catholique de Louvain*, I enjoyed James Tracy's perceptive analysis of Belgian regionalization [Dec. 5]. May I add one more complicating factor to this already complex topic that seems to have been overlooked?

In recent years, there has been a growing trend in all areas of Belgium, but more markedly within the French-speaking regions, towards greater cultural and economic regionalism within each language community. During my studies in Wallonia, I encountered several students and French-language broadcasters who no longer think of themselves as "regional carriers of a world civilization." Far from "occasional zealots for literature in the Walloon dialect," these individuals represent a growing body of opinion that is seeking to rediscover the uniqueness of each sub-regional community within Wallonia and greater Brussels. Many young Walloons do not look to Paris for cultural guidance (indeed, many French intellectuals saw the death of their "world civilization" in the Sorbonne riots of May 1968). Witness the recent trend of French-language Belgian radio and television to regionalize its broadcasts and produce several hours of original drama in the various Walloon dialects.

On the Dutch-speaking side, what Mr. Tracy refers to as the "myth" of Flemish community-mindedness is hardly mythical. Much of the history of the Flemish movement in the past one hundred years has been marked by efforts to standardize and unify culture and political ideology. While living in Flanders, I often found it difficult to communicate with educated Flemings over fifty, but had fewer problems employing my "Literary Dutch" on young children. While in general Flemish school children are told to speak standard "Nederlands" while many Walloon teachers are more tolerant of the dialects of Namur and Liège, one wonders whether all in Flanders fully agree with the "Netherlandization" of their diverse culture.

Of course I generalize, but my point is simply this: Some of what English-speakers see as a purely Flemish vs. Walloon struggle often involves the evolution of various trends within each language community. Just as Lowell Weicker and Barry Goldwater belong to the same political party and have joined together for partisan goals, so do Flemings, Walloons and Bruxelleis make odd linguistic bed fellows.

As Europe becomes increasingly

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united as a political and economic force while adapting to growing cultural regionalization, she may teach us a lesson about the meaning of the term "federalism." And *that* lesson may have an enormous impact on a multi-cultural nation such as the United States.

(REV.) WILLIAM POMERLEAU

Amoral economics?

Montrose, Calif.

To the Editors: Michael O'Neill's remarks (Correspondence, Nov. 21) regarding conservative (i.e., free-market) economics seem to be a classic example of the pot calling the kettle black.

To begin, the use of "culturally celebrated words" like "free enterprise" and "free market" is not confined to advocates of laissez faire economics. Michael Harrington's advocacy of economic "democracy" is surely intended to evoke a positive emotional response, as is Mr. O'Neill's references to such "culturally celebrated" freedoms as "freedom from hunger, oppression, and injustice."

Second, as to the "amorality" of conservative economics, this also may be in the eye of the beholder. I can conceive of no economic philosophy more amoral than one which both sees no moral tension in placing the mind, labor, and body of one man at the disposal of another (as all collectivist economic philosophies do), and then hails this sacrifice of one to another as a great moral good. Prior to the advent of the "new freedoms" celebrated by Mr. O'Neill, we recognized this kind of moral "good" as slavery and didn't try to rationalize it with references to the "prior human rights and needs of individuals and societies."

If Mr. O'Neill is really concerned about consistently defending human rights, I suggest he study current libertarian literature such as *For A New Liberty* by Murray Rothbard. Here he will find a broad-based attempt to understand the nature and scope of what can consistently be termed "human rights" and to illuminate the political and economic implications of "rights" conceived in this way. If a value-based economic philosophy is what Mr. O'Neill is looking for (as opposed to the value-free or value-less economics of the "Chicago boys") then libertarianism is the place to begin.

I must confess that I have a hard time understanding how Mr. O'Neill, who comes out of a tradition that acknowledges the "limitations of man's knowledge and morality," ends up opting for solutions to economic problems that are collectivist in orientation. If man's knowledge and morality ar as fallible and weak as Mr. O'Neill believes, then I would think he'd be very wary of giving ignorant and immoral people like me the right and the authority to tell him how to use his skills, expend his resources, and think his thoughts. Of course, if he *wants* me to run his life, that's his problem. But if he asks for the right to run my life, then thanks, but no thanks. After all, Mr. O'Neill, isn't this one of the "more important freedoms" which you affirm that I have, or should have—the right to be "free from oppression?"

RICHARD J. EUSON

Church/world watch

vadors and the South Koreas of the developing world. In these cases Dr. Kirkpatrick's tolerance for authoritarian regimes and intolerance of a strong human rights policy when dealing with U.S. allies appears to signal the new age of policy. Her perspective fits the wider logic of seeing U.S. policy toward developing countries through the prism of East-West relations.

The specifics of such a policy are not yet clear, but the first to feel the effects may be precisely those countries where the Catholic witness on human rights and social change has been most vigorous. In Seoul, San Salvador, and São Paulo, many are watching Washington these days with severe apprehension.

J. BRYAN HEHIR

("World/church watch" will be a regular feature in Commonweal. *J. Bryan Hehir is Associate Secretary for International Justice and Peace at the United States Catholic Conference in Washington and a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston.)*

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